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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE

Published monthly at New York, N. Y., for November 1, 1919

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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Barr Ferree, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the publisher of

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE

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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

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EASTERN NIGHTS—AND FLIGHTS.

BY "CONTACT" (ALAN BOTT).

CHAPTER XIII.—THE FACE AT THE WINDOW.

"M. Titoff," announced the first mate, entering his cabin with a hunched-up figure of a man whose most obvious characteristics were shifty eyes, very high cheek-bones, and a shrivelled yellow skin.

M. Titoff and I inspected each other with care as I rose from the only chair and shook hands. He, I knew, was the guiding spirit in the syndicate of mates and engineers whom we were bribing.

He produced a book of English phrases, with their Russian equivalents. Opening it at a prepared page he ran his finger down the list and said—

"Seegnal!"

"Signal?"

"Yess, ceegarette seegnal."

Remembering the arrangements for the beer-house rendezvous, I placed a cigarette behind my left ear; whereat the chief engineer and the first mate smiled and shook hands once again. Neither of them could speak any language but Russian, so that we talked with difficulty, exchanging half-understood patter from the phrase-book.

After some strumming on the mandolin and balalaika by Titoff and Belaef, I slept on the first mate's couch, with my money tucked next to my skin. Next morning I was introduced to the third mate, a stocky Lett who could speak German. Using him as interpreter Titoff explained his arrangements. I was to dress myself as a Russian sailor, leave the *Batoum*, and be led to the hiding-place in Pera. White and I were to remain there for a week, until the day before

the ship sailed. We could then be concealed on board the *Batoum* until she was safely out of the Bosphorus.

Wearing some old clothes belonging to Kulman, the third mate, but with their rank badges removed, I rowed ashore. Kulman accompanied me, while Titoff, prominent in white drill, waited on the quay. Neither he nor the white-bearded old man to whom he was talking took the least notice of us, but turned and passed towards the Rue de Galata. The third mate and I followed, without, however, showing apparent concern in their movements.

At the corner of a side-street on the far side of the Rue de Galata Titoff left his companion. Kulman followed suit by leaving me, after giving instructions that I must follow the old man.

The stranger led the way up the hill towards Pera, while I kept behind him at a convenient distance, on the opposite side of the road. For a quarter of an hour he moved through a succession of uneven streets and cobbled alleys, so that I soon lost my bearings. I was not conscious of the least danger, however. In the faded old uniform of a sailor, and with my civilian clothes wrapped in a newspaper, I attracted little attention. Occasionally I looked into shop windows to divert the suspicions of any who might otherwise have noticed that I was following the ancient.

Finally, the guide halted among the wooden houses on the outskirts of Pera, produced an enormous key, and unlocked an iron door. I slackened my steps as he disappeared inside, but passed through the door a few seconds later.

Inside was half-darkness. Besides the old man I could see, dimly, an unkempt and unshaven figure, wearing an overcoat that was much too small for him. I looked at this apparition with puzzled doubt. Surely it could not be White, whom I had last seen running through the streets of Koum-kapou in a perfectly respectable suit of Red Cross clothes? Yes, it must be, for it came towards me with outstretched hand.

"Glad to see you, old man," said the figure in the overcoat. "I don't know which of us looks the more comic."

"Why the dyed moustache, and why this?" pointing to a faded fez which protruded from one of his pockets.

White reserved his tale until Titoff's friend had left us, after promising to return with food and water.

While the guard was chasing him in Koum-kapou, White related, he turned the corner suddenly and saw an open doorway. He rushed into it, acting on impulse. Just inside the door was a woman, who screamed. He put his hand over her mouth, then dodged down a narrow passage into the back room, while the pursuing guard raced past the house and up the street.

Very fortunately for White the woman was a Greek, and as such well disposed to the

British. She hid him in a cupboard for an hour, and persuaded her husband, when he arrived home at midday, to provide a disguise.

White bought a fez and an overcoat, and blackened his moustache. The Greek, unfortunately, was shorter and slighter than he, so that it was impossible to wear the overcoat without removing his own jacket and waistcoat. These he left in the house. The result, however, justified his loss, for when he left the Greeks late in the afternoon, he was a perfect study of a broken-down Levantine.

He arrived too late for the beer-house rendezvous at Galata, and after waiting vainly for half an hour, was obliged to spend the evening and night as best he could. As he wandered along the Rue de Galata a policeman stopped him and, according to the Near East habit, showed a cigarette without saying a word, and signed that he wanted a light. This White supplied from the cigarette he was smoking. The gendarme passed on, without deigning to thank the wretched-looking man in a faded fez and torn coat.

A café, a cinema, and a visit to Pera cemetery filled his evening. Afterwards, unable to hire a room at any hotel because he had no *vécika*, he spent the night in a low-class lodging-house. Next day he met Titoff's Russian friend in the German beer-house, according to plan; and so to the hiding-place.

This hiding-place of ours was a disused workshop belonging to the Russian, who claimed to be a carpenter. Its only furniture was a crude bench and a long table. The floor lay inches deep in shavings, through which the rats rustled all night and most of the day. There was one small window; but this we were told to keep covered by its iron shutter, in case somebody should look in from the street. A tiny yard led from the corner opposite the door to the bottom of a shaft, down which the dwellers on the upper floors of the building threw their rubbish.

In themselves these conditions were fairly bad; for apart from the lack of furniture, the atmosphere was always dusty and unpleasantly musty, and unless we opened the window the workshop remained in perpetual twilight.

But the worst drawback of all was that only a flimsy partition separated us from the living-room of a Turkish officer. His bedroom was above our wooden ceiling. Everything he did we could hear quite plainly, whether he coughed, spoke, whistled, removed his boots, or snored.

The Turkish officer, we realised, must likewise hear every movement of ours; so that whenever either he or his orderly or anybody else was in his rooms we maintained perforce a death-like stillness. We scarcely dared to whisper, or to tiptoe across the workshop on bootless feet. In the daytime the striking of a match had to be masked by scraping the shavings, to make

a noise like a rat. After daylight smoking was impossible, because the glimmer would have shown through the many cracks in the partition.

We slept side by side on the wooden table, with rolled-up coats as pillows. White once woke up in the middle of the night and was horrified to hear me talking in my sleep. Very fortunately the Turk above was not awake, and so missed the performance. Afterwards we never slept at the same time, but kept watch in turn, in case one of us should snore or otherwise attract attention. Four of our nights in the workshop were broken into by machine-gun fire from a near-by roof during British air-raids.

On my arrival White had told me that we must be particularly careful in the mornings, just after the Turkish officer left the house. The noises from the living-room then suggested that somebody, probably the Turk's wife, was tidying it. This happened on three successive mornings. What worried us in particular was a scrunching and scraping behind the partition, which suggested that the wife suspected our presence and tried to look at us through the cracks. Each time this occurred we crouched at the bottom of the partition, fingered our lips warningly, and scarcely breathed. On the fourth day, when the Russian brought our food, we told him our suspicions.

"We believe this Turkish officer's wife knows of us," said White. "Every morning she comes to the partition and seems to be looking through it."

The carpenter grinned.

"But," he explained, "the Turk has no wife. What you've been frightened of is his tame rabbit!"

Each day we hoped for news of the *Batoum's* date of sailing. Three times it was postponed; and, bored and wretched, we remained in the miserable workshop.

Unable to keep our minds as inactive as our bodies, we took the risk of leaving the window half-open during the daytime, so that we might study our Russian text-books, in readiness for Odessa. Seated on the shavings, in a position to catch the shaft of light that streamed through the narrow panes, we passed many hours with the copying and learning of Russian phrases.

When, after hours of study, our concentrative faculties became stale, the only alternative was to hope for success, and to live again in retrospect the extravagant happenings of the past few weeks. Most of the business usually associated with the crudest melodrama had been there, I reflected—spies, policemen, disguises, chases, female accomplices, and bluff. Decidedly it had been thrilling; but for the future I desired intensely to experience such thrills only at second-hand.

But even in this secluded room we were not to be spared the atmosphere of movie-horrifics. Another stock thrill was inflicted on us—The Face at the Window.

There had seemed no likelihood of discovery from the street. Even if we bared the window from its iron shutter nobody could see into the room without raising himself on the ledge, for the lower panes were coated with an opaque glaze. At meal-times, therefore, we let in the daylight by withdrawing the shutter.

One morning, after breakfast, when the Turkish officer had left his rooms, I saw White stiffen suddenly as we cleared the table.

"Look natural," he whispered, "there's no time to duck."

I picked up a plank of wood and tried to appear as if my business were carpentry; for over there, four yards away, a fez was rising slowly above the glazed portion of the window. White performed convincingly with a tape-measure, the nearest thing to his hand.

The fez was the forerunner of a much-wrinkled forehead. Then came a pair of villainous eyes, a bent nose, and cheek-bones with light olive skin drawn tightly across them. The rest of the face remained hidden by the glaze. The Turk—for such he evidently was—must have levered himself from the ground by means of the window-ledge.

"Don't take any notice of the swine," White murmured.

Outwardly calm but inwardly nervous and shaking, I pretended to busy myself with the carpenter's tools; although it was difficult to withstand a shocked instinct to gaze at the face. It remained for about two minutes of heart-throbbing tension, then disappeared and left me gasping with the surprise and the shock of its visit. We heard somebody walking away from the building and down the hill towards Galata.

The Face might have belonged to a police spy, we speculated, but it might have been that of a casual passer-by who was indulging the curiosity in respect of other people's business which is common to most Turks. In that case no harm would be done, for the stranger had seen nothing suspicious — only a workshop, some tools and planks, a loaf of bread and a half-melon on the table, and two coatless, collarless, unshaven, untidy-haired men, who seemed to be working.

The carpenter showed fright on being told that a Turk had looked in at us, and said he must consult Titoff. Before he returned on the following morning the Face had again appeared, as before—first a fez rising slowly above the glazed pane, then a wrinkled forehead, then the villainous eyes and the crooked nose. It remained staring for a few seconds, and disappeared.

This time the Russian could contain neither his fear nor his impatience to get us out of the workshop. If we were caught, said he, it would only mean imprisonment for us; but him the Turks might hang as a spy. He told us to pack our belongings, while he went to the *Batoum* and arranged with Titoff for us to be taken on board.

An hour later a procession of three passed through the winding streets towards the quay. We left the workshop in turn, at intervals of a few seconds; for we had decided to walk separately, so that if one of us were stopped the others could make themselves scarce. First went the carpenter, leading the way down the hill to Galata. I followed, twenty yards behind him, still dressed as a Russian sailor; and about twenty yards behind me came White, in his fez and old overcoat. We scarcely looked at each other, but mooched along different sections of the road. Each was ready, at a second's warning, to dash down the nearest alley.

Until the Rue de Galata was reached the only people we saw were the dull-eyed and ragged inhabitants of the slum quarter that fringes Pera, sitting in their doorways and blinking in the heat of early afternoon. But when we crossed the Rue de Galata White almost rubbed shoulders with a couple of gendarmes.

Titoff was waiting on the quayside. White and I approached him, whereupon the Russian carpenter retraced his steps and left us. In my character of a Russian seaman I saluted the *Batoum's* chief engineer. He hustled us into a waiting *kaik*, and ordered the *kaiktche* to row to the *Batoum*.

Kulman was waiting at the top of the gangway. He led us to his cabin, where, he said, we were to live for the present.

Meanwhile the ship was still empty of cargo, and no definite date of sailing had yet been given. This uncertain delay was especially unfortunate, because, apart from the growing risk of discovery, our money was diminishing at an alarming rate.

The cabin door was kept closed all day long, to prevent discovery by the captain. In the heat of those August days on the Bosphorus the stifling stuffiness of the unventilated little room became almost unbearable. Yet we had one consolation. The port-hole could be left open without fear of intrusion by the Face, with its wrinkled forehead surmounted by a fez, its villainous eyes, its crooked nose, and its olive skin drawn tightly across the cheek-bones; and only at early morning did I see it, in the half-tones of the period between sleeping and waking.

CHAPTER XIV.—A SHIPLOAD OF ROGUES.

Michael Ivanovitch Titoff, one-time chief engineer of the tramp steamer *Batoum*, proved to the dissatisfaction of Captain White and myself that he was a thief, a mean blackguard, a cunning liar, a cringing coward, a rat, and an altogether despicable cheat. Otherwise he was not a bad sort of fellow.

At the time when we lived on board the *Batoum* as stowaways her officers and crew

were rogues almost to a man. Except Titoff and one or two of the crew they were likeable rogues, however, and applied an instinctive sense of decency to their unlawful dealings.

For example, Andreas Kulman, the Lettish third mate, would cheerfully cheat the Turkish merchant who had chartered the vessel, and cheerfully smuggled drugs from anywhere to anywhere; but I never knew him cheat a friend or a poor man, or take advantage of a stranger in difficulties. To us, as prisoners escaping from Turkey, he showed many kindnesses; and if we had been without money he would have been willing to take us across the Black Sea without payment. The other mates were of the same type, if a trifle less obliging.

The second and third engineers—Feodor Mozny and Josef Koratkov—were among the few of our shipmates who could not be classified as rogues. They transgressed only to the innocuous extent of smuggling moneyed stowaways and contraband goods. They also showed disinterested goodwill towards White and me; as did the second engineer's wife, who voyaged with her husband. Several evenings she spent in the heat of the frowsy little engine-room, washing our only underclothes, while we sat in Josef's cabin, clad in nothing but the tunic and trousers of our Russian-sailor disguises.

We wore these disguises for the benefit of visitors to the *Batoum*, and not to throw dust in the eyes of the crew. That was needless, for except the captain every man belonging to the ship soon knew of us. The marvel was that with so many people privy to the secret it never leaked to the Turkish police. In pro-Entente circles ashore our presence on the *Batoum* was widely known and widely discussed; and I count it a debt to Providence that the news was not carried to the Ministry of War by one of the city's many police spies.

The crew were unlikely to betray us knowingly, for every man of them must have been concerned in something which might wither in the strong light of a police investigation. Besides, they were tolerant of the British, while disliking the Turks even more than they disliked the Germans. The danger from them was that they got drunk ashore and often brought women friends to the boat.

The captain—a white-bearded, bent-backed Greek of about eighty—seemed incompetent and well on the way to senile decay, but withal harmless. This voyage was to be his last before enforced retirement. He was as wax in the cunning hands of Titoff, who kept him from the knowledge that two escaped Britishers were aboard. Had he known he would have either insisted on our removal, or—more probably—demanded a large share of the passage money. It was easy to keep the ancient in ignorance, for apparently he knew less than anybody else of what happened on his vessel. Titoff assured us that should the captain see

us in our disguise of Russian sailors he would remain unsuspicious if we took care not to speak. His declining mind had become too feeble to remember off-hand even the number of the crew; and much less could he remember their faces. Once I brushed by him closely, outside Kulman's cabin. He passed without a glance at me, looking on the ground and muttering into his beard.

The crew were a dubious mixture. Many—in particular the firemen—had been Bolsheviks until Austro-German forces landed at Odessa and Sevastopol, and temporarily crushed Bolshevism in South Russia. Others, ex-members of the *bourgeoisie* who were unable to make a living on land under present conditions, had become temporary seamen by the grace of friends connected with the shipping company that owned the *Batoum*. There was also a bright youth named Viktor, who, until the Bolshevik revolution, was a student. His father had been killed in the rioting at Kieff that accompanied the Soviet rise to power; and the son, to keep himself alive, now swabbed the decks of a tramp steamer, and submitted to being kicked by sailors and corrupted by Michael Ivanovitch Titoff. Viktor spoke French and German, and was therefore much in request as interpreter when the ship's officers bargained with their stowaways or invested in contraband consignments, or when one of them brought on board some cosmopolitan wench from Pera or Galata.

Our most interesting shipmate on the *Batoum* was, perhaps, Bolshevik Bill, the greaser. One afternoon when White, dressed in sailor's clothes, was helping to paint the ship's side, a hard-faced giant in overalls approached him, produced a Russian-French grammar, and asked for a lesson. So far as his slight knowledge of French and slighter knowledge of Russian allowed, White did his best to comply. Thereafter the greaser became a close friend, following us round the deck in the evening, visiting us at odd hours during the daytime, and bringing us figs. Like most of the greasers and firemen, he was a Bolshevik. He was not a bloodthirsty Bolshevik, however, but one who, according to his own limited and crude conceptions of universal equality, wanted plenty of wealth, plenty of happiness, plenty of vodka for all. He was especially eloquent and brotherly when drunk.

Others of the Bolsheviks were idealists of a more exterminative type. Once, when White was playing cards with some firemen in the engine-room, the talk swung to the Russian revolution. A lean man, who until then had been too busy drinking to speak, began to describe the mutiny in the Baltic fleet, of which he had been a sailor. In his intensity he seemed to live again through the horrors of it, as with gloating gesture he told how unpopular officers had been thrown

into the sea, with weights tied to their feet.

"That was bad, very bad," protested White in his halting Russian. "If you are in power, and somebody has done wrong, he should be given a fair trial, and, if convicted, put in prison. But to kill men merely because you dislike them is very wrong."

"Well said," commented Bolshevik Bill, the greaser.

"No; well meant, if you like," amended the lean fireman, as he patted White on the back; "but the Meester does not understand us. We would never do such a thing to English officers. We had them as instructors, and found them true friends of their men. Our officers were very different. They hit us and ignored us and treated us like animals. We shall never be permanently free until they are all dead. We must destroy their class. Russia . . ."

His voice had been growing louder and more raucous. Suddenly it softened as he turned to White and said: "Meester, you know your business, and we know ours. Have a fig." And the game of cards continued.

Yet, among the whole shipload of rogues, the only man who victimised us was Titoff, the chief engineer. When we first came aboard he demanded four pounds Turkish a day for food; which, being stolen from the ship's supplies, cost him nothing. At the instigation of the second and third engineers we reduced the payment to one and a half pounds Turkish a day. He blustered, but gave way, and tried to make up the difference by cheating us over tobacco, cigarettes, newspapers, and other articles bought on shore. He paid twenty-five dollars for a revolver, and tried to sell it us for thirty-five, as being the cost price.

We had left at Psamatia a store of clothes and tinned food, which was to have been smuggled on board by the Russian aviator, Vladimir Wilkowsky. As the days passed and nothing arrived, we suspected Wilkowsky of having either failed or fooled us. Then, at a party in Titoff's cabin one evening, I saw inside a cupboard some tins of biscuits and cocoa of the kind that were sent to aviator prisoners in Turkey by the British Flying Services Fund. Titoff could not—and in any case certainly would not—have bought them in Constantinople; for English cocoa and biscuits, if obtainable at all in the shops of Pera, fetched impossible prices.

Although the mere sight of the tins provided insufficient proof, the inference was that Wilkowsky had sent our belongings, and that Titoff had stolen them. We delayed investigation and accusation until we should be safely out of Turkey, and in the possession of revolvers. Some time or other we meant to make Titoff suffer. Meanwhile we were forced to wait until our moment came.

Delay followed upon heart-breaking delay, until we began to lose hope that the *Batoum* would ever weigh anchor. In

four days' time, it was promised, the cargo would arrive. Two days later the four days had stretched, elastic-wise, to ten, because a consignment of figs had not arrived from the interior. Then, a week afterwards, a further extension of five days was reported, the Turkish merchant having failed to come to terms with the Ministry of Commerce.

It became impossible for us to remain in Kulman's cabin, which faced the captain's. The old skipper received many visitors, including Turkish officials, any one of whom might have been led by mischance to discover us. At Titoff's suggestion we moved to a small room on the bridge, formerly occupied by a wireless operator, in the days when the *Batoum* was a Russian transport. The transmitter and receiver were still there, but had been out of action long since, for the Germans forbade the use of wireless by merchant craft in the Black Sea.

There we remained hidden for a succession of twelve monotonous days and nights, varied by British air-raids and by expeditions to the deck when sunset and twilight were past, and we could take exercise by tramping backwards and forwards, forwards and backwards, in the shadow. For the rest, we continued to study Russian, and received friendly calls from Kulman, Josef, Feodor, Viktor, and Bolshevik Bill, the greaser.

Titoff visited us once only, when he searched for the platinum points on the Marconi transmitter. But already every morsel of platinum had been removed; and the chief engineer seemed disgusted that somebody else should have anticipated his latest idea for profitable villainy.

The tedium of inactive waiting, of day-to-day hopes and disappointments, was as unpleasant and irritating as a blanket of damp horse-hair. Our only diversion was the kaleidoscopic view from the window, as the ship swung with the tides. Not fifty yards away the Sultan's summer palace stood in white-stoned prominence amid the dull, squat buildings of Galata. Looking across the Bosphorus, with its heavy *dhows*, its ferry-boats, its dancing *kaiks*, and its sun-glittering wavelets, we could see Seraglio Point, and in the distance the domed roofs and minaret spires of St Sophia and the other great mosques of Stamboul.

Meals were served irregularly, for journeys from the kitchen to the wireless cabin were dependent upon the outgoings and incomings of the captain and his visitors. Whenever he or they came on the bridge, we made fast the door and crouched beneath the window.

Our supply of money continued to dwindle, until it was insufficient to pay the four hundred Turkish pounds which Titoff demanded as passage money. We hesitated to approach Mr S. once more, not wishing to involve him in our danger. Yet we had no other

method of obtaining funds. Driven to the distasteful course by urgent necessity, we decided to compromise by communicating with him through intermediaries, instead of visiting his office ourselves.

Titoff was anxious to be employed as messenger; but we shrank from placing him in a position which he might misuse to blackmail Mr S. We therefore resumed communication with Theodore, the Greek waiter, by sending him an envelope that contained instructions for himself and a sealed letter for Mr S. When Titoff went ashore to deliver the envelope to Theodore, Kulman accompanied him, as a check on his propensity to walk crookedly.

The pair returned with the welcome news that Mr S. would cash our cheques in three days' time.

Meanwhile the stowaway syndicate had been offered new business. Fulton and Stone had appeared once again upon the escape-horizon, and were living in Theodore's house. Yeats-Brown, in his disguise, was paying them frequent visits. Theodore had approached Titoff with a proposition that on the night before the *Batoum* sailed the three of them should join us.

The chief engineer and his partners rather shied at the increased risk; but the money offered was too much for them, and they agreed to take Yeats-Brown, Fulton, and Stone.

And then, with the prospect before us of sufficient funds and three useful companions, we suffered yet another disappointment. At the time appointed for a rendezvous Titoff went to fetch the money which Mr S. was to send by Theodore. He returned with an anxious face and the announcement that the Greek waiter had disappeared. He waited vainly for over an hour in the Maritza restaurant, where the other waiters professed to know nothing of Theodore's whereabouts.

It now seemed that not only should we be unable to pay for our passage, but that we had lost the money paid by Mr S. (so we surmised) in exchange for our cheques. Somewhere, we felt sure, there was roguery. Three likely and unpleasant possibilities loomed before us. Theodore might have stolen the money and then vanished; Titoff might have stolen it; they might have stolen it jointly. Our one legitimate hope was that Mr S. might not have cashed the cheques before Theodore's disappearance.

Our only chance of discovering the truth was personal investigation. On the following afternoon White, again wearing his fez and old overcoat, and with his moustache darkened, rowed ashore. He took the tram to the foot of the Golden Horn bridge, walked across to Stamboul, and entered the Maritza. The low-roofed restaurant's appearance was as usual; but somehow the atmosphere seemed electric with suspicion. A Turkish officer of gendarmerie sat at a table near the door. Theodore was conspicuously absent.

White ordered a glass of beer, and while doing so asked for news of him. The waiter looked frightened, and left the table without a reply. When he returned White repeated the question. He was told—

"He has fallen with the three British officers. I pray you not to talk of it."

"But I must know," urged White, speaking in low-toned halting French. "I am a British officer myself"—for this waiter, also, had acted as an intermediary for prisoners. He now looked more frightened than ever, and took care to keep away from the neighbourhood of White's table.

Glancing round, White saw a Turk washing his hands in the little basin at the back of the room, while looking, slantwise but intently, at each man present in turn, but more particularly at the proprietor and the waiters.

After White's return to the *Batoum* with the bad news, we all but gave up hope of recovering the four hundred Turkish pounds; for the police would most certainly have taken whatever monies were found on Theodore. We had also to reckon with the new danger that bastinado-floggings might persuade the Greek into betraying us.

Next morning's issue of the 'Lloyd Ottoman' brought detailed confirmation. Three British officers, said a *faits divers* paragraph, had been concealed in the house of one Theodore Yanni, a Greek waiter employed at a restaurant in Stamboul. The police surrounded the building, and discovered them. They were taken to the Ministry of War prison with Theodore, his two sisters, and his old mother.

The Ministry of War prison —"The Black Hole of Constantinople!" We could see the Ministry of War in the distance from the bridge of the *Batoum*, and knowing the horrors of its special punishment cells, we shuddered with sympathy for the strangely mixed party. Theodore himself, we supposed, would be hanged out of hand.

Our almost hopeless position forced us into the reckless decision to discover the truth by paying a personal visit to Mr S. His office was in the Prisoners of War department of the Dutch Legation, where he helped to administer the British Red Cross funds.

The building was on the way to the Petits Champs Gardens, near the Pera Palace Hotel; and there I went, in my sailor's uniform, with Kulman as companion. At the door was a multi-lingual porter, whom I had seen when, before my escape, I once bribed a guard into letting me visit the Prisoners' Bureau.

I hung back and allowed Kulman to take the lead, for I feared that despite the Russian uniform the porter might recognise me by certain scars on my face, the legacy of an aeroplane crash. Fortunately he could talk Russian. In answer to Kulman, he said that Mr S. was out for the rest of the day. We left, therefore, and passed the afternoon in various

cafés, where Kulman introduced me to friends as a German-speaking Lett.

Next afternoon, before starting for Pera, I was careful to make the tell-tale scars less evident by means of chalk and powder. This time we found that Mr S. was in the Dutch Legation Annexe, although engaged and busy. We walked up the stairway to the first floor, and stood in the corridor outside Mr S.'s office.

Only then did I realise the foolhardiness of the visit. Very much in evidence were two officials whom I had met as a prisoner; and I was forced to shrink behind Kulman when there passed a Jewish *kavass* who knew me well, from having brought clothes and money when I was a hospital patient. Fortunately he went by with only a casual glance at the two men in sailors' uniform.

We remained in the passage twenty minutes, and still the man with whom Mr S. was closeted remained in the office. Twice, speaking in French, I made application to the lady-secretary of Mr S.; but already before we arrived three people had been waiting to see him, and I was told that we must wait our turn. Kulman became anxious and fidgety, especially when, looking down the stairs, he saw some Turks in the hall.

Standing near us in the corridor were two elderly Jews, who appeared to listen intently when Kulman thought fit to emphasise the uniform by addressing me in Russian. Presently one of them produced an unlighted cigarette, and, also speaking in Russian, asked me for a match. Without a word I complied; while Kulman forestalled suspicion, which would have arisen if the Jew had begun to question me, by himself beginning a conversation. I avoided taking part in it by again visiting the lady-secretary. Later, Kulman drew me aside and said that it was impossible to remain any longer with the two Russian-speaking Jews.

His nerves—and mine also, for that matter—became still more shaky when, as we passed through the hall doorway, the porter stared hard at me, and then followed us with his eyes until we turned into a side-street that took us out of sight.

Although I had failed for the moment to reach Mr S., it was imperative that one of us should see him. A new method of approach was advisable, for I believed that the porter half-thought he recognised me. If I returned he would be more than ever suspicious of the scars, for everybody in the Prisoners of War Bureau had heard of my escape. The only alternative was for White to go. His disguise as a Turk would be useless, as most people at the Legation spoke Turkish well, whereas he spoke it indifferently, with an accent that reeked of English vowel-sounds. We canvassed various nationalities and *rôles*, and agreed that he must accuse himself of being one of the American missionaries who were still at liberty in Turkey.

Wearing my suit of mufti and the felt hat which I bought on the day I escaped, White shook hands and left me, after a reminder that if he were captured my clothes would go to prison with him. He was far from cheerful, for it was Friday, the thirteenth of August, and he remembered that his capture in Mesopotamia had taken place on Friday, the thirteenth of August 1915.

Anxiously and uncomfortably I waited through several hours of strained inactivity, fearing that if White also were recognised at the Prisoners' Bureau, disaster might overtake not only him, but our benefactor Mr S.

At six o'clock he burst into the wireless cabin with a beaming face and the joyous announcement—

"I've seen S., and the money's not lost."

White's Friday, the thirteenth of August, had been an exciting one. He walked into the doorway of the Prisoners of War Bureau, and, speaking in English, asked for Mr S.

"Name?" inquired the porter.

"Mr Henry O'Neill, from Tarsus."

"Do you know Mr S.?"

"Why, certainly; I'm a friend of his." And White felt in his waistcoat pocket, as if searching for a card.

"His office is on the street floor," said the porter, satisfied. "Go straight up."

With a gulp of relief White passed up the stairway. Like myself on the day before, he had to wait many minutes before Mr S. was disengaged: and like myself, he was horrified to see Levy, the Jew *kavass* who had brought his letters and parcels to Gumuch Souyou Hospital. The *kavass* beamed and delivered himself of an oily greeting, but failed to remember where he had met White.

"You speak as an Englishman," he said, after a few words of conversation.

"Of course I'm English," admitted White, slapping Levy on the back.

"Are you alone?"

"No, my guard's waiting outside."

The *kavass* fetched a chair for White, and seemed disposed to ask more troublesome questions. Just then the visitor who had been engaged with Mr S. left the office, and White walked inside, praying that the *kavass* and the porter would not compare notes and identify Mr Henry O'Neill of Tarsus with the British prisoner whose guard was waiting in the street.

The door being closed, White explained his real identity to Mr S., and offered apologies for the dangerous visit to which he had been forced by our desperate situation.

"You needn't worry about the money," said Mr S.; "I had no chance of paying it. I've destroyed the cheques."

He went on to relate how that, not wishing to trust the Greek waiter with a large sum, he had sent a clerk to pay the bank-notes into the hands of Titoff, at the Maritza. The clerk visited the little

restaurant on the afternoon when Titoff waited in vain for Theodore. He dared not deliver the money there and then, for a Turk appeared to be watching the Russian engineer. When Titoff tired of waiting and went into the street, the Turk followed and shadowed him. The clerk, in his turn, trailed the Turkish agent unobtrusively. The three of them travelled in the same subway car from Galata to Pera. Titoff passed into Taxim Gardens. So did the agent and the clerk. He sat down and ordered a drink near the bandstand. The agent chose a table near him, and the clerk stationed himself within sight of both. At last, giving up hope of an opportunity to speak with Titoff, the clerk returned to Mr S. and gave back the money.

Mr S., meanwhile, had heard of the capture of Yeats-Brown, Fulton, and Stone, all of whom he had helped. He realised that he himself was in grave danger.

"I've had some sleepless nights over those fellows," he said to White. "I rather think I've been watched since they were taken with Theodore, and I know your friend Titoff's watched. If Theodore blabs in prison, my neck will be almost as near the noose as his."

Mr S., very rightly, was unwilling to advance us money for the present.

"The police want you badly," he pointed out, "and I'm probably a suspect already over Yeats-Brown and Company. If you're grabbed in Constantinople I want to be able to say with a clear conscience that I've given you no cash since you escaped. I shall know when the *Batoum* is due to leave, and do my best to help you on the day before she sails, when you're all but out of the wood. The difficulty will be in finding a messenger. An English lady[1] helped the fellows who were retaken, and she'd like to take you the money. But she's involved over them, and the police are watching her."

Deeply appreciative of the great risks which Mr S. was taking on behalf of not only us, but every prisoner who had tried to escape from Constantinople, White thanked him and left. At the top of the stairs he said good-bye to the *kavass* who knew him as a prisoner; at the front door he nodded to the porter who knew him as Mr Henry O'Neill of Tarsus. And so back to his *rôle* of paying guest on the *Batoum*.

With eased minds and renewed hope we continued to live in our wireless cabin, and prayed to Allah that the *Batoum* would sail soon, and that Mr S. would find some means of sending the money. Away in the distance we could see the citadel of the Turkish Ministry of War, in which Yeats-Brown, Fulton, and Stone were dungeoned. All Constantinople talked of the capture, and the word went

[1] Miss Whittaker.

round the cafés that Theodore was to be hanged as a traitor for having helped enemy prisoners to escape.

Thereupon Titoff, mortally afraid for his own neck, wanted to get rid of White and me. He made our shortage of ready money an excuse for ordering us ashore; but we claimed to have grown too fond of him to part company, and said that if we did leave the ship it would be to give ourselves up to the police, with the request that our friend and colleague Michael Ivanovitch Titoff should join us in prison. Michael Ivanovitch then protested, out of the kindness of his heart, that he would take us to Odessa whether we paid the full amount or only part of it.

So the anxious hours passed, until at last the sickening period of delay ended with the arrival of a consignment of cargo. A succession of lighters left the quay and moored alongside us, and all day we listened with delight to the clatter and whirr of the winches as they transferred bales and barrels to the *Batoum's* hatches. The final and infallible date of departure, announced the Turkish merchant who had chartered the ship for her voyage to Odessa, was August the twenty-second—four days later.

CHAPTER XV.—THE CITY OF DISGUISES.

Constantinople, even at its most normal, has ever been a city of concealment—concealed motives, concealed truths and falsehoods, concealed cruelties, and concealed persons. There, the way to a treaty, a change of government, a concession or a commercial contract, is likely to be through back doors and curtained corridors, with many a halt for whispered promises, whispered betrayals, and the handing over of *baksheesh*.

When normal life is upset by abnormal conditions the cauldron of crookedness bubbles over with a thousand and one conspiracies. Every other man is intriguing for himself, his safety, his pocket, his party, his family, or his government appointment, or from sheer inability not to intrigue. Such a period was the late summer of 1918, when we were disguised spectators of the misery and oppression that preceded the downfall of the Turkish Empire.

Four-fifths of the population, including the Turks themselves, were deadly sick of war and wanted peace at any price. They hated the Germans, and above all hated Enver Pasha and other Young Turk dictators, who ruled by violence with the support of the Germans. Only the politicians, the corrupt officials, and the speculators were against a separate peace.

Many a time before I escaped I heard curses on Enver and on the Germans uttered by civilians, by officers, and even by guards. Once, when a

party of us were sitting in Petits Champs Gardens, a waiter brought with the bill for tea a slip of paper on which he had written "Vive l'Angleterre!" Later, dressed as a sailor and sitting in the cafés with Kulman, I often heard the same sentiments expressed.

Yet the miserable exploited populace was powerless to impress its wishes on the government. It was too disunited and too listless for action. A total lack of national consciousness made Constantinople a capital without a country. The population was a haphazard jumble of races, an *olla podrida* of peoples that nothing, not even hunger and tyranny, could mould into a coherent whole. Men murmured individually, but collectively they remained resigned and silent.

If circulation be the test of a city's vitality, it proved Constantinople to be at very low ebb. All Mediterranean peoples move slowly in the streets; but the Constantinopolitans of 1918, I noticed, seemed to get nowhere; they crawled about aimlessly, or leaned against the walls and doorways in fatalistic inaction, *waiting for something to happen.*

In any case, the least attempt at organised protest was likely to lead to sudden disappearances. The dungeons of the Stamboul jail were crammed with Greek, Armenian, and Turkish suspects; the infamous "Hall of Justice," in the Ministry of War, echoed the cries of prisoners whose interrogators extracted information by means of the bastinado. Open malcontents were hanged daily.

Every decent-living person was likely to feel the tentacles of Young Turk tyranny, as personified by Bedri Bey, Prefect of Police, and Djevad Bey, Military Governor of Constantinople. Only the unrighteous flourished. The speculation and graft were colossal, and beyond the most extravagant dreams of the British brand of war profiteer. Everybody was on the make. Ministers and high officials received huge bribes, little politicians made little fortunes by acting as go-betweens, rich merchants manipulated so as to get hundreds per cent profit.

To take but a few of the swindles that I remember from my Constantinople days, there were the Smyrna sugar *affairs*, involving the barefaced theft of twenty truckloads of a consignment from Austria; the tobacco swindle, which made three directors of the Régie very wealthy men within a month; the cocaine and quinine corner, engineered by a few Jewish speculators, so that for a time the doctors could obtain these drugs only at the price of a hundred pounds Turkish a kilo; the oil scandal, the wood scandal, and the widespread flour-adulteration scandal, whereby the lowest grade of bread, which was all that the poor could afford, became not only unnourishing but inedible.

There being no system of rationing, only the well-to-do

could buy the dearer necessities of ordinary life. The poor remained sugarless, for example, because sugar cost from two pounds sterling a kilo; and the chances were that even when bought at that price it would have been mixed with powdered marble. Thousands actually starved; while the beautiful island of Prinkipo, with its summer palaces and villas, swarmed with oily, scoundrelly, enormously wealthy Levantine vulgarians.

Some of the Ministers traded openly. Enver Pasha and his associates owned two of the largest shops in Stamboul. The Committee of Union and Progress, a vampire of corruption that drained the very life-blood of Turkey, engaged enthusiastically in the orgy of speculation, and by controlling the transport amassed millions for their party. These sums the Committee had begun to invest in Switzerland and elsewhere as early as 1917, so that when the crash came Enver, Talaat, and other young Turk leaders were able to abscond with bulging pockets.

The police, of course, shared in the plunder, and dabbled in every species of blackmail. They waxed fat on the system that entitled them to see the *vécikas* (identity papers) of any able-bodied man at any time. As the city contained many thousands of deserters, without taking into account those who obtained exemption from military service by continued bribes to recruiting officers and gendarmes, this was a profitable responsibility.

A forged *vécika*, properly stamped, cost anything from ten to twenty pounds. To buy off a policeman when unprovided with a *vécika* was more speculative. A solitary gendarme, alone in a dark street, might be content to accept five pounds; whereas two gendarmes together could be persuaded only with difficulty to accept twenty, their mutual dignity and that of their official positions having to be maintained in face of each other.

The city was full of suppressed identities. Deserters were as common as nuts in May, and so were disguises. An enormous game of hide-and-seek was in progress, with police *baksheesh* as the forfeit for being caught.

When a rich man—Turk, Greek, Jew, or Armenian—was conscripted he could always pretend sickness, bribe the military doctor to send him to a hospital, bribe the hospital doctor who examined him, and finally bribe the medical board to give him leave. At the larger hospitals of Constantinople, such as Haidar Pasha and Gumuch Souyou, the recognised tariff was twenty-five pounds for each month's leave, with pretended complaints suggested by the doctor by way of bonus.

The discontent and the misery twice showed itself in shots at Enver Pasha as he drove through the streets in his Mercèdes; but the bullets either missed him or flattened themselves on the chain-mail which he was reputed to wear.

Otherwise its outward mani-

festation was confined to the spreading of rumours indicative of an early victory for the Allies. The "Tatavla Ageney," so named from a district inhabited by Greek merchants, was the centre of anti-German propaganda. From it, even at the time of Hindenburg's last great drive, there spread the wildest reports of Ententist successes. Some, no doubt, were concocted to influence the Bourse; but the object of most was to encourage the starving population in their hopes for the downfall of the Young Turko-German régime.

No statement was too far-fetched to be believed in the bazaars and cafés. When the British aeroplanes renewed their bomb-raids on Constantinople in the autumn of 1918, Yeats-Brown dropped various hints that the attacks were not the work of the British, but were a display of German frightfulness, to show what would happen if Turkey's loyalty to Germany wavered. After an interval of weeks this beautiful lie was whispered back to him by a Greek, with well-imagined circumstances and details to make it more plausible.

Yeats-Brown and Paul lived through the most extravagant adventures before the Turkish armistice found them still in disguised liberty. They first escaped with the help of Miss Whittaker, "the Edith Cavell of Constantinople." It was owing to her that, already before leaving the prison at Psamatia, they were well supplied with money and could look forward to a hiding-place. As prisoners, they had kept in touch with her by means of letters, five-minute meetings outside the British church, and short conversations in the park, under the complacent eyes of a bribed guard.

One night they slipped through the window of their room in the prison-house, and having climbed along a narrow ledge, let themselves into the street with a rope. Wearing fezes and with their faces stained brown, they walked to Theodore's house. Afterwards they moved to the room prepared for them in Pera.

A few days later Paul, dressed as an Arab, left Constantinople with two Greeks. The party of three crossed the Sea of Marmora in a sailing-boat, landed on the northern coast, and began tramping towards the Gulf of Enos.

Unfortunately for Paul the description of him which the Ministry of War had circulated mentioned that he had a prominent stoop. A stranger with this peculiarity was found asleep in the church of a Greek village, and by arresting him the local gendarme earned (but probably never received) the reward offered for the British officer's capture. Paul was brought back to the capital and dungeoned in the Ministry of War prison.

Yeats-Brown, meanwhile, had been stalking about the streets of Constantinople as Mlle. Josephine Albert, in female clothes lent by Miss Whittaker. He was now at a loose end, for Paul and the Greeks were to

have been the advance-guard of a larger party, including Yeats-Brown and several civilians who wished to leave Turkey.

After weeks of excitement in the City of Disguises, he received an unexpected message from two old friends, who were living in a back room of Theodore's house. Fulton and Stone had escaped from a train at Haidar Pasha station two hours after my disappearance from the ferry-stage. With the help of my map they made their way by moonlight to San Stefano aerodrome. There they waited for three days at the place of rendezvous appointed by John Willie, the Bosnian aviator. Made desperate by his non-appearance, one of them called at the German officers' mess and inquired for him; but, as they then learned, John Willie had been arrested a week earlier as a suspect, and was in the Ministry of War prison awaiting court-martial.

Fulton and Stone returned to Constantinople and bribed Theodore to hide them in his house. They were visited by Miss Whittaker, who brought money from Mr S., and by Yeats-Brown.

For want of a better opportunity the three British officers planned to buy a small sailing-boat and take it across the Black Sea. Prince Avaloff, the Georgian officer, who was a semi-prisoner at Psamatia, had kept in touch with Yeats-Brown, and promised to accompany them. Having landed somewhere near Poti, their plan would be to make for Avaloff's estate in Georgia. It was while these arrangements were being made that White and I heard from the trio, as a result of Titoff's visit to Theodore.

For many weeks the Maritza restaurant had been watched. A police spy suspected Theodore; and one afternoon gendarmes surrounded his house, while others entered and searched every room. Very unfortunately for Yeats-Brown, whose hiding-place lay elsewhere, he was visiting Fulton and Stone at the time. All three were captured.

A queer procession passed through the winding alleys of Stamboul to the Ministry of War prison. First went Theodore, blinking nervously behind his blue-glassed spectacles. Then came Yeats-Brown, in his brand-new disguise of a Hungarian mechanic. Fulton and Stone were behind him, wearing only shirts, pants, and socks; for they had been half-dressed when captured, and the police refused permission to put on coats and trousers. Theodore's two sisters and his old mother brought up the rear.

When the police surrounded Theodore's house Miss Whittaker was on her way to visit Fulton and Stone. Seeing gendarmes before the door she passed on, and returned to her own home in Pera; but for long afterwards she was conscious of being spied upon and followed. It was for this reason that she had to abandon her intention of bringing to the *Batoum* the money which White and I were to receive from Mr S.

The prison beneath the Ministry of War now con-

tained an extraordinary gathering of characters in the melodrama of escape and capture. Paul was joined by Yeats-Brown, Fulton, and Stone; John Willie the Bosnian was in another cell, with some political prisoners; Theodore, weakened by lack of food, fell ill in a dreadful dungeon and nearly died. A trial, he knew, could only have one result for him—sentence of hanging. His mother and his two sisters received rather better treatment, and were soon released.

The four Britishers lived through many strange days in the prison, where they consorted with a variety of captives that included Greeks, Armenians, Turkish officers, two Mahommedan notabilities from Cairo, a young Turkish prince who had been imprisoned for brawling in the Sultan's Palace, and the prince's eunuch. Yeats-Brown and Paul, meantime, planned to escape from the famous old jail—a feat which no captive had yet performed since it was built six hundred years ago.

While walking in the garden one evening they slipped away from their guards and mingled with a crowd of officials who were crossing the courtyard outside the Ministry of War. Swerving aside before they reached the sentried gate, the pair climbed over some railings—and were free once more.

They walked across the Golden Horn bridge, and so to Pera. There, once again, Miss Whittaker and her friends found them a place of concealment near the deserted British Embassy.

Then began for the escaped couple a period of flitting from one excitement to another. They became involved in a succession of underground activities; and, with the help of Greeks and the clever co-operation of Miss Whittaker, they spread around the city reports, beliefs, hopes, and arguments likely to influence citizens in favour of the Allies and against the Germans and Young Turks. They buried their identities under darkened hair, false moustaches, fezes, and forged *vécikas*.

Yeats-Brown's propaganda work brought him into contact with a small group of politicians and malcontents who were plotting a *coup d'état* against the Young Turks. Although the miserable exploited populace had no popular leader to voice its discontent, there came a moment—while the Bulgars were at the gates of Adrianople, communications with Germany were cut, the Allied Fleet threatened Dedeagatch and the citizens of Aleppo were preparing to surrender to Allenby's victorious cavalry—when every one in Constantinople knew that Turkey was beaten. Open rebellion, which was to have hanged Talaat, Enver, and Djemal Pashas high in the square of the Seraskarat, then threatened.

But the rising was still-born, owing to treachery. The Prefect of Police suddenly quadrupled his patrols, a few Turkish officers were arrested, a few more civilians were hanged, a few conspirators

disappeared into the submerged world where men walked cautiously and in the shadow, a few machine-guns were placed so as to command a Greek cathedral, a couple of aged senators were executed for having "intrigued for a political resolution hostile to the Government," and life went on as before—upon the surface. . . .

But escaped prisoners did not live upon the surface. They were in touch with seditious elements beneath it. Once, when Yeats-Brown was in a certain café with some Greeks, and the talk was becoming wild as the *árak* bottle passed, there entered a detective known to everybody, even to the British officer who was the youngest initiate in "crime" present. And without a whisper or a wink the talk swung, easily and naturally, from the rankest sedition to the most harmless commonplace.

"We will destroy the Young Turks!" said a speaker; "we will destroy the Young Turks and cut them in little pieces!"

He was harmonising his words with indescribably graphic gesture when his expressive hands opened in a bland expression of resignation.

"What, therefore, can we do, my friends?" he continued. "We must remain calm, and retain our dignity as citizens of a great city."

Nobody looked round or betrayed surprise; but the alien presence was sensed by all. Soon after this scene the meeting adjourned to a cellar, where a quiet elderly gentleman, the proprietor of an hotel inhabited chiefly by German officers, declared himself desirous of cutting his clients' throats.

In war-time Constantinople one grew accustomed to this atmosphere of melodrama, and learned not to regard it too seriously. The more one knows of the Constantinopolitan of to-day, the less can one trust any estimate of him. Eternally fickle, like his forerunners who looked on with equal enthusiasm at the triumph and execution of their emperors and sultans, they saw no incongruity in the city's hero-worship of Enver Bey in 1908 and its deep detestation of Enver Pasha in 1918. Even now, after welcoming the French and British with mad joy one short year ago, they are restless, and again wear the cloak of conspiracy.

The wayward fickleness of Constantinople ruined the Byzantine Greeks, and sapped the strength of the Roman Empire. Now, after a long period of fretful wedlock, she is shaking herself free from the Turk. Whoever next attempts to rule her will have some restless days and nights.

At the beginning of September there arrived in Constantinople another escaped prisoner, who was to play an important part in the sensational events that preceded the downfall of the Young Turks and their German partners.

Several months earlier Lieutenant-Colonel Newcombe had been imprisoned in the Turkish Ministry of War, while awaiting court-martial for an attempted escape. After his

acquittal, owing to lack of evidence, he was allowed into the city with the prison interpreter. In a Pera tea-shop he met Mlle. S., a Franco-Greek lady of Entente sympathies, who offered to help him in any way possible. A secret correspondence followed; and when Colonel Newcombe was sent to the prison camp at Broussa, Mlle. S., with her maid, followed him.

She stayed at a small hotel, on the pretence of taking the sulphur baths for which Broussa was famous. Several meetings took place, including a rendezvous at the house of the local Austrian Consul, whose daughters were schoolfellows of Mlle. S.

The final interview at Broussa was when Colonel N., having obtained the clothes of an Arab *imam*, disguised himself in this dress and slipped out of camp unobserved. He walked to the hotel, and there the scheme of escape was definitely arranged. He then returned, and by climbing over a wall got back into the prison-house without being seen.

Mlle. S. left Broussa for Constantinople. On the way she stopped at Mudania (the port of Broussa), to bargain with two Greek boatmen, who agreed to take the British officer across the Sea of Marmora. From Constantinople she had a letter smuggled to Broussa, explaining how the boatmen might be recognised.

Having read the letter Colonel Newcombe again disguised himself as an Arab, and at dusk slipped away from the prison-house, while another officer-prisoner distracted the guards' attention by running in the opposite direction. He walked all night by moonlight, and reached Mudania next morning.

Having found the Greeks, and paid twenty pounds Turkish for the hire of their boat, he put to sea with them. A strong wind raged, so that he was fourteen hours on the Sea of Marmora, living during this time on bread and raisins. Finally, he reached Constantinople and went to the house of some relations of Mlle. S.

Like White and myself, Colonel Newcombe planned to go to Russia. He also had his fill of adventure. Once he remained safely hidden in Miss Whittaker's house while the police were searching it for Yeats-Brown and Paul.

He wrote several anti-German proclamations for distribution among the Turkish soldiers, and concocted a letter to the Turkish Army commanders advising them to refuse further service unless a new Ministry were formed. But the Turco-German debacle in the Near East, of which General Allenby's victories in Palestine and the Bulgarian surrender were the beginnings, made him abandon this work for something more important. Soon he found himself drawn into the very centre of the vortex of plotting that swirled around the Sultan, the Cabinet, and the Sublime Porte.

The peace parties lacked a leader powerful enough to take open action; and when the old

Sultan, who had been but a puppet dancing to strings pulled by Talaat and Enver, died in July, they hoped to find one in his brother, the successor to the throne.

The new ruler, although he was neither strong enough nor able enough to challenge the Young Turk leaders until after the Bulgarian armistice, certainly leaned towards the Entente and favoured peace. Almost his first act was to send for the only English tailor in Constantinople, a civil prisoner, and to order several uniforms from him.

The excitement among the Turkish politicians was indescribable.

"Have you heard about Mr Hayden, the English tailor? The Sultan said to him . . ." —and rumour made the Sultan tell the English tailor everything that was sensationally anti-German and anti-Enver.

Had the Sultan opposed the Grand Vizier and Enver Pasha in July, he would have found support, for three-fourths of Constantinople detested the Government. But the constabulary were faithful to Enver, who could likewise have relied upon the many thousands of German troops concentrated in the city; and a premature attempt by the Sultan to withdraw Turkey from the war would have risked his life and his throne.

The defection of Bulgaria had the effect of an unexpected cold douche on the Young Turk dictators, who, after the Turkish occupation of Batoum and capture of Baku, had been dreaming of a Greater Turkey that was to include the Maritza basin, most of the Dobrudja, and the whole of the Caucasus from the Black Sea to the Caspian, with a sphere of influence extending eastward to Bokhara and Samarkand. Agents and gramophone records were carrying the voice of Enver all over the Moslem world.

When the Balkan Railway was cut, and daily reports of German retreats in France continued to arrive, even the Young Turk politicians began to desert the rotten ship of state. The opposition groups —the Liberal, the Navy, and the Khoja parties—raised their hands and began to intrigue for a complete surrender to the Allies.

Djambolat Bey, the Minister of the Interior, resigned. Rahmi Bey, the powerful Vali of Smyrna, who throughout the war had shown every consideration to the Entente subjects in his province, came to Constantinople with the avowed intention of working for an immediate peace. Talaat was for bargain and compromise. Only Enver Pasha and his personal followers remained faithful to their German friends. The Sultan's chance had come.

Colonel Newcombe decided on an audacious plan of action. He wrote an able memorandum which suggested that if Turkey now threw herself on the mercy of the Allies and sued for a separate peace, she would obtain better terms than if she waited until Germany was thoroughly beaten. This memorandum,

originally the draft of a proposed proclamation to the Turkish Army, was taken by Miss Whittaker to a Committee politician of her acquaintance. Eventually one copy of it was given to Fethi Bey, the new Minister of the Interior, and another passed through the hands of the Sultan's dentist to the Sultan himself.

A week earlier—on September the 29th—the Young Turk Cabinet had met to consider the Bulgarian demand for an armistice; and the Grand Vizier, who arrived from Germany by the last Balkan express to pass through Sofia, offered his resignation. At the time nobody could form an alternative Ministry, so Talaat again took up the reins of power.

The Sultan and the Minister of the Interior received their copies of Colonel Newcombe's memorandum on October the 5th. During the intervening days it had become more and more plain that Germany was doomed to defeat. The Sultan and the Peace parties, therefore, only wanted a suitable bludgeon for a *coup de grâce* to the Ministry.

They found it in this purely unofficial communication from an escaped prisoner of war. Colonel Newcombe's memorandum was produced and discussed at a stormy Council of the Committee of Union and Progress, which resulted in the definite resignation of Talaat and Enver. Tewfik Pasha, Izzet Fuad Pasha, and other Opposition leaders were called into consultation by the Sultan.

From being a hunted fugitive, Colonel Newcombe suddenly found himself a man of courted consequence. As a special favour he was asked not to carry out his plans for escaping from Turkey, because the Ottoman Government believed he would be useful in arranging an armistice. He met the Vali of Smyrna at the Tokatlian Hotel, and there the British prisoner and the high Turkish official shook hands and discussed the changing international situation.

On October the 16th, Colonel Newcombe, accompanied by Miss Whittaker, went by appointment to the house of a politician, where he met the new Minister of the Interior, the Vali of Smyrna, and other notabilities. Over the dinner table the mighty questions of peace and war were then debated by an escaped prisoner of war and a prominent Minister of the country in which he was technically still a captive.

Colonel Newcombe explained that though he worked for allied and not Turkish interests, his friendly advice was that the Ottoman Government should immediately sue for a separate armistice, because whereas Germany wanted to keep a weak Turkey, whom she could dominate, the Allies' principle of the rights of nationality forbade any idea of complete domination.

The Turks' attitude at this curious meeting was summed up in remarks, made by Fethi Bey, Minister of the Interior—

"We know we have lost our chance. There have been mis-

takes in the past. We are practically bankrupt. But we honestly hate the Germans, and, without kowtowing to the British, look to them to help us and to be our friends, as we want to be friends with them."

Colonel Newcombe and the Turkish officials thrashed out such questions as Turkey's financial bankruptcy, the opening of the Dardanelles, the capitulations, autonomy for Armenia and Arabia, and punishment for the Armenian massacres and for the maltreatment of British prisoners from Kut-el-Amara (whereby nearly 80 per cent of the latter had died). Then, after dinner was over, the Minister of the Interior dictated in French a long telegram, which the British officer was to send to Mr Lloyd George as soon as he should reach allied territory.

Next day the Ministry tried to send him out of Turkey by aeroplane, but failed because all aircraft were in the hands of the Germans. It was agreed that he should receive special passports, and proceed *viâ* Smyrna to either Chios or Mudros.

After the dinner party of the 16th events moved rapidly towards an armistice. The Vali of Smyrna caused a sensation two days later by stating openly, in the 'Journal d'Orient,' that peace negotiations were in progress, and that the Germans would have to go. Later in the day he again met Colonel Newcombe at the Tokatlian Hotel, and discussed the best means of approaching England for an armistice. By now the escaped Colonel was going about Constantinople quite openly, although Yeats-Brown and Paul remained more or less in hiding.

Meanwhile General Townshend, who was still a prisoner on Prinkipo Island, had also sent a memorandum to the Government. A Turkish armistice commission was formed, and he was asked by the Grand Vizier to accompany the delegates who were about to leave the country; which he did. It was arranged that Colonel Newcombe would follow in a few days' time.

On his last night in Constantinople Colonel Newcombe went by appointment to the terrace of the deserted British Embassy, and there met Captain Yeats-Brown, who had slipped past the police into the Embassy grounds. It was a meeting that neither of them will ever forget. Below was the Golden Horn shimmering in the moonlight, and across its waters Stamboul showed up dimly, quiet and apparently asleep. But the watchers on the Embassy terrace knew that the city might stir from slumber at any moment, for the Phanar was bristling with machine-guns, St Sophia was an armed camp, and, more terrible than all, people were starving in the streets. The waning sickle moon that rode above Stamboul seemed the symbol of the Turks' waning dominion over Christian peoples. Very soon the Crescent would go down. Very soon the Union Jack would float from the Embassy's

barren flagstaff. Very soon Pera would be decked with banners, and an Allied fleet would proclaim an end to the nightmare of famine and oppression.

Next day Colonel Newcombe, who had been handed civilian passports by the Minister of the Interior, travelled from Constantinople to Smyrna. Finally, he left Turkey in the company of Raouf Bey, the new Minister of Marine. The party put to sea in a trawler, and were picked up by H.M.S. *Liverpool*. They were taken to Mudros, where the British Admiral C.-in-C., and General Townshend were already dealing with the Turkish delegates.

Up to the very end the Young Turk leaders hoped to hold the real, if not the ostensible, control in Constantinople. Captain Yeats-Brown was told by a politician, one of the ex-Grand Vizier's intimates, that "nobody but Talaat could possibly manage Turkey," and that "the English, if they come, would be well advised to deal with the Committee of Union and Progress, as there is no other real party in the country. They not only have all the money, but all the brains and energy as well." Which last statement was nearly true.

But when it came to saying that Talaat was one of the dominant brains of the century, and comparable as a statesman only to Lloyd George, the disguised British officer could not help smiling and suggesting: "Sure Talaat is not indispensable? If he goes, another ex-telegraphist may arise, as good as he!"

This the member of the Committee of Union and Progress regarded as almost blasphemy; but the fact that all the Young Turk leaders were self-made men, yet with little knowledge of the science and history of civilised governance, was one of the causes why von Wangenheim, von Bernstorff, and other emissaries of German Imperialism, were able, for four years, to inspire a policy of Turkey for the Germans.

The sudden *volte-face* of the Turkish press, the announcement of the armistice terms, the flight of the three chief criminals (Talaat, Enver, and Djemal Pashas), and the downfall of the swaggering Germans, brought great joy to the miserable populace of Constantinople. They vented their feelings in delirious enthusiasm over some released prisoners who visited Pera, wearing their carefully-hoarded khaki uniforms.

The curtain was down, the sordid tragedy of oppression and corruption was over. The new era opened in the mist of a November morning, with the long low lines of an Allied Fleet steaming very slowly past the Marmora shore towards the Bosphorus.

(*To be continued.*)

SIMON.

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON.

XXXIV. A CONFIDENTIAL CONVERSATION.

THE laird of Stanesland strode into the King's Arms and demanded—

"Mr Carrington? What, having a cup of tea in his room? What's his number? 27—right! I'll walk right up, thanks."

He walked right up, made the door rattle under his knuckles and strode jauntily in. There was no beating about the bush with Mr Cromarty either in deed or word.

"Well, Mr Carrington," said he, "don't trouble to look surprised; I guess you've seen right through me for some time back."

"Meaning—?" asked Carrington with his engaging smile.

"Meaning that I'm the unknown, unsuspected, and mysterious person who's putting up the purse. Don't pretend you haven't tumbled to that!"

"Yes," admitted Carrington, "I have tumbled."

"I knew my sister had given the whole blamed show away! I take it you put your magnifying-glass back in your pocket after your trip out to Stanesland?"

"More or less," admitted Carrington.

"Well," said Ned, "that being so, I may as well tell you what my idea was. It mayn't have been very bright; still, there was a kind of method in my madness. You see, I wanted you to have an absolutely clear field and let you suspect me just as much as anybody else."

"In short," smiled Carrington, "you wanted to start with the other horses and not just drop the flag."

"That's so," agreed Ned. "But when my sister let out about that £1200 and I saw that you must have spotted me, there didn't seem much point in keeping up the bluff, when I came to think it over. And since then, Mr Carrington, something has happened that you ought to know, and I decided to come and see you and talk to you straight."

"What has happened?"

Ned smiled for an instant his approval of this prompt plunge into business, and then his face set hard.

"It's a most extraordinary thing," said he, "and may strike you as hardly credible, but here's the plain truth put shortly. Yesterday afternoon Miss Farmond ran away." Carrington merely nodded, and he exclaimed, "What! You know then?"

"I learned from Bisset this morning."

"Ah, I see. Did you know I'd happened to see her start and gone after her and brought her back?"

Carrington's interest was manifest.

"No," said he, "that's quite news to me."

"Well, I did, and I learnt the whole story from her. You can't guess who advised her to bolt?"

"I think I can," said Carrington quietly.

"Either you're on the wrong track, or you've cut some ice, Mr Carrington. It was Simon Rattar!"

"I thought so."

"How the devil did you guess?"

"Tell me Miss Farmond's story first and I'll tell you how I guessed."

"Well, she spotted you were a detective——"

Carrington started and then laughed.

"Confound these women!" said he. "They're so infernally independent of reason, they always spot things they shouldn't!"

"Then she discovered she was suspected, and so she got in a stew, poor girl, and went to see Rattar. Do you know what he told her? That I was employing you, and meant to convict Sir Malcolm and her and hang them with my own hands!"

"The old devil!" cried Carrington. "Well, no wonder she bolted, Mr Cromarty!"

"But even that was done by Simon's advice. He actually gave her an address in London to go to."

"Pretty thorough!" murmured Carrington.

"Now what do you make of that? And what ought one to do? And, by the way, how did you guess Simon was at the bottom of it?"

Carrington leaned back in his chair and thought for a moment before answering.

"We are in pretty deep waters, Mr Cromarty," he said slowly. "As to what I make of it—nothing as yet. As to what we are to do—also nothing in the meantime. But as to how I guessed—well, I can tell you this much. I had to get information from some one, and so I called on Mr Rattar and told him who I was—in strict confidence, by the way, so that he had no business to tell Miss Farmond or anybody else. I had started off, I may say, with a wrong guess: I thought Rattar himself was probably either my employer or acting for my employer, and when I suggested this he told me I was right."

"What!" shouted Ned, "the grunting old devil told you that?" He stared at the other for a moment, and then demanded, "Why did he tell you that lie?"

"Fortune played my cards for me. Quite innocently and unintentionally I tempted him. I said if I could be sure he was my employer I'd keep him in touch with everything I was doing. I had also let him know that my employer had made it an absolute condition that his name was not to appear. He evidently wanted badly to know what I was doing, and thought he was safe not to be given away."

"Then have you kept him

in touch with everything you've done?"

Carrington smiled.

"I tell you, Mr Cromarty, my cards were being played for me. Five minutes later I asked him who benefited by the will, and I learned that you had scored the precise sum of £1200."

"I hadn't thought of that when I made my limit £1200!" exclaimed Ned. "Lord, you must have bowled me out at once! Of course, you spotted the coincidence straight off?"

"But Rattar didn't! I pushed it under his nose and he didn't see it! Inside of one second I'd asked myself whether it was possible for an astute man like that not to notice such a coincidence, supposing he himself had really guaranteed me exactly that sum—an extraordinarily large and curious sum too."

"I like these simple riddles," said Ned with a twinkle in his single eye. "I guess your answer to yourself was 'No!'"

Carrington nodded.

"That's what I call having my cards played for me. I knew then that the man was lying, so I threw him off the scent, changed the subject, and did *not* keep Mr Simon Rattar in touch with any single thing I did after that."

"Good for you!" said Ned.

"Good so far; but the next riddle wasn't of the simple kind—or else I'm even a bigger ass than I endeavour to look! What was the man's game?"

"Have you spotted it yet?"

Carrington shook his head.

"Mr Simon Rattar's game is the toughest proposition in the way of puzzles I've ever struck. While I'm at it I'll just tell you one or two other small features of that first interview."

He lit a cigarette and leant over the arm of his chair towards his visitor, his manner growing keener as he talked.

"I happened to have met Miss Farmond that morning, and my interview had knocked the bottom out of the story that she was concerned in the crime. I had satisfied myself also that she was not engaged to Sir Malcolm."

"How did you discover that?" exclaimed Ned.

"Her manner when I mentioned him. But I found that old Rattar was wrong on both these points, and apparently determined to remain wrong. Of course it might have been a mere error of judgment, but at the same time he had no evidence whatever against her, and it seemed to suggest a curious bias. And finally, I didn't like the look of the man."

"And then you came out to see me?"

"I went out to Keldale House first, and then out to you. I next interviewed Sir Malcolm."

"Interviewed Malcolm Cromarty!" exclaimed Ned. "Where?"

"He came up to see me," exclaimed Carrington easily, "and the gentleman had scarcely spoken six sentences before I shared your opinion of him, Mr Cromarty—a squirt, but not homicidal. He gave

me, however, one very interesting piece of information. Rattar had advised him to keep away from these parts, and for choice to go abroad. I need hardly ask whether you consider that sound advice to give a suspected man."

"Seems to me nearly as rotten advice as he gave Miss Farmond."

"Exactly. So when I heard that Miss Farmond had flown, and discovered she had paid a visit to Mr Rattar the previous day, I guessed who had given her the advice."

Carrington sat back in his chair with folded arms and looked at his employer with a slight smile, as much as to say, "Tell me the rest of the story!" Cromarty returned his gaze in silence, his heaviest frown upon his brow.

"It seems to me," said Ned at last, "that Simon Rattar is mixed up in this business—sure! He has something to hide, and he's trying to put people off the scent, I'll lay my bottom dollar!"

"What is he hiding?" inquired Carrington, looking up at the ceiling.

"What do you think?"

Carrington shook his head, his eyes still gazing dreamily upwards.

"I wish to Heaven I knew what to think!" he murmured; and then he resumed a brisker air and continued, "I am ready to suspect Simon Rattar of any crime in the calendar—leaving out petty larceny and probably bigamy. But he's the last man to do either good or evil unless he saw a dividend at the end, and where does he score by taking any part or parcel in conniving at or abetting or concealing evidence or anything else, so far as this particular crime is concerned? He has lost his best client, with whom he was on excellent terms, and whose family he had served all his life, and he has now got instead an unsatisfactory young ass whom he suspects, or says he suspects, of murder, and who so loathes Rattar that, as far as I can judge, he will probably take his business away from him. To suspect Rattar of actually conniving at or taking any part in the actual crime itself is, on the face of it, to convict either Rattar or oneself of lunacy!"

"I knew Sir Reginald pretty well," said Ned, "but of course I didn't know much about his business affairs. He hadn't been having any trouble with Rattar, had he?"

Carrington threw him a quick approving glance.

"We are thinking on the same lines," said he, "and I have unearthed one very odd little misunderstanding, but it seems to have been nothing more than that, and, apart from it, all accounts agree that there was no trouble of any kind or description."

He took another cigarette out of his case and struck a match.

"There must be *some* motive for everything one does—even for smoking this cigarette. If I disliked cigarettes, knew smoking was bad for me, and stood in danger of being fined if I was caught doing it, why

should I smoke? I can see no point whatever in Rattar's taking the smallest share even in diverting the course of justice by a hair's-breadth. He and you and I have to all appearances identical interests in the matter."

"You are wiser that I am," said Ned simply, but with a grim look in his eye, "but all I can say is, I am going out with my gun to look for Simon Rattar."

Carrington laughed.

"I'm afraid you'll have to catch him at something a little better known to the charge-sheets than giving bad advice to a lady client, before it's safe to fire!" said he.

"But, look here, Carrington, have you collected no other facts whatever about this case?"

Carrington shot him a curious glance, but answered nothing else.

"Oh, well," said Ned, "if you don't want to say anything yet, don't say it. Play your hand as you think best."

"Mr Cromarty," replied Carrington, "I assure you I don't want to make facts into mysteries, but when they *are* mysteries—well, I like to think 'em over a bit before I trust myself to talk. In the course of this very afternoon I've collected an assortment either of facts or fiction that seem to have broken loose from a travelling nightmare."

"Mind telling where you got 'em?" asked Ned.

"Chiefly from Rattar's housemaid, a very excellent but somewhat high-strung and imaginative young woman, and how much to believe of what she told me I honestly don't know. And the more one can believe, the worse the puzzle gets! However, there is one statement which I hope to be able to check. It may throw some light on the lady's veracity generally. Meantime I am like a man trying to build a house of what may be bricks or may be paper bags."

Ned rose with his usual prompt decision.

"I see," said he, "and I guess you find one better company than two at this particular moment. I won't shoot Simon Rattar till I hear from you—though, by Gad, I'm tempted to kick him just to be going on with! But look here, Carrington, if my services will ever do you the least bit of good—in fact, so long as I'm not actually in the way—just send me a wire and I'll come straight. You won't refuse me that?"

Carrington looked at the six feet two inches of pure lean muscle and smiled.

"Not likely!" he said. "That's not the sort of offer I refuse. I won't hesitate to wire if there's anything happening. But don't count on it. I can't see any business doing just yet."

Ned held out his hand, and then suddenly said, "You don't see any business doing just yet? But you feel you're on his track, sure! Now, don't you?"

Carrington glanced at him out of an eye half quizzical, half abstracted.

"Whose track?" he asked.

Ned paused for a second and then rapped out—

"Was it Simon himself?"

"If we were all living in a lunatic asylum, probably yes! If we were living in the palace of reason, certainly not—the thing's ridiculous! What we are actually living in, however, is——" he broke off and gazed into space.

"What?" said Ned.

"A blank fog!"

XXXV. IN THE GARDEN.

It was a few minutes after half-past eight when Miss Peterkin chanced to meet her friend Mr Carrington in the entrance-hall of the King's Arms. He was evidently going out, and she noticed he was rather differently habited from usual, wearing now a long light topcoat of a very dark-grey hue, and a dark-coloured felt hat. They were not quite so becoming as his ordinary garb, she thought, but then Mr Carrington looked the gentleman in anything.

"Are you going to desert us to-night, Mr Carrington?" asked the manageress.

"I have a letter or two to post," said he; "they are an excuse for a stroll. I want a breath of fresh air."

He closed the glass door of the hotel behind him and stood for a moment on the pavement in the little circle of radiance thrown by the light of the hall. Mr Carrington's leisurely movements undoubtedly played no small part in the unsuspecting confidence which he inspired. Out of the light he turned, strolling easily, down the long stretch of black pavement with its few checkers of lamplight here and there, and the empty silent street of the little country town at his side. It was a very dark moonless night, and the air was almost quite still. Looking upward, he could see a rare star or two twinkle, but all the rest of the heavens were under cloud. Judging from his contented expression the night seemed to please him.

He passed the post-office, but curiously enough omitted to drop any letters into the box. The breath of fresh air seemed, in fact, to be his sole preoccupation. Moving with a slightly quickened stride, but still easily, he turned out of that street into another even quieter and darker, and in a short time he was nearing the lights of the station. He gave these a wide berth, however, and presently was strolling up a very secluded road, with a few villas and gardens upon the one side, and black space on the other. There for a moment he stopped and transferred something from the pocket of his inner coat into the pocket of his topcoat. It was a small compact article, and a ray of light from a lamp-post behind him gleamed for an instant upon a circular metal orifice at one end of it.

Before he moved on, he searched the darkness intently, before him and behind, but saw no sign of any other passenger. And then he turned the rim of his dark felt hat down over his face, stepped out briskly for some fifty yards farther, and turned sharply through an open gate. Once again he stopped and listened keenly, standing now in the shadow of the trees beside the drive. In his dark topcoat and with his hat turned over his face he was as nearly invisible as a man could be; but even this did not seem to satisfy him, for in a moment he gently parted the branches of the trees and pushed through the belt of planting to the lawn beyond.

The villa of Mr Simon Rattar was now half seen beyond the curving end of the belt that bounded the drive. It was dim against the night sky, and the garden was dimmer still. Carrington kept on the grass, following the outside of the trees, and then again plunged into them when they curved round at the top of the drive. Pushing quietly through, he reached the other side, and there his expedition in search of fresh air seemed to have found its goal, for he leaned his back against a tree-trunk, folded his arms, and waited.

He was looking obliquely across a sweep of gravel, with the whole front of the house full in view. A ray came from the fanlight over the front door, and a faint radiance escaped through the slats of the library blinds, but otherwise the villa was a lump of darkness in the dark.

One minute after another passed without event and with scarcely even the faintest sound. Then all at once a little touch of breeze sprang up and sighed overhead through the tree-tops, and from that time on there was an alternation of utter silence with the sough of branches gently stirred.

From a church tower in the town came the stroke of a clock. Carrington counted nine, and his eyes were riveted on the front door now. Barely two more minutes passed before it opened quietly; a figure appeared for an instant in the light of the hall, and then, as quietly, the door closed again. There was a lull at the moment, but Carrington could hear not a sound. The figure must be standing very still on the doorstep, listening—evidently listening. And then the thick-set form of Simon Rattar appeared dimly on the gravel, crossing to the lawn beyond. The pebbles crunched a little, but not very much. He seemed to be walking warily, and when he reached the farther side he stood still again, and Carrington could see his head moving, as though he were looking all round him through the night.

But now the figure was moving again, coming this time straight for the head of the belt of trees. Carrington had drawn on a pair of dark gloves, and he raised his arm to cover the lower part of his face, looking over it through

the branches and facing the silent owner of the garden, till there were hardly three paces between them, the one on the lawn, the other in the heart of the plantation.

And then when Simon was exactly opposite he stopped dead. Carrington's other hand slipped noiselessly into the pocket where he had dropped that little article, but otherwise he never moved a muscle, and he breathed very gently. The man on the turf seemed to be doing something with his hands, but what, it was impossible to say. The hands would move into his pocket and then out again, till quite three or four minutes had passed, and then came a sudden flash of light. Carrington's right hand moved half-way out of his pocket and then was stayed, for by the light of the match he saw a very singular sight.

Simon Rattar was not looking at him. His eyes were focussed just before his nose, where the bowl of a pipe was beginning to glow. Carrington could hear the lips gently sucking, and then the aroma of tobacco came in a strong wave through the trees. Finally the match went out, and the glowing pipe began to move slowly along the turf, keeping close to the shelter of the trees.

For a space Carrington stood petrified with wonder, and then, very carefully and quite silently, he worked his way through the trees out on to the turf, and at once fell on his hands and knees. Had any one been there to see, they would have beheld for the next five minutes a strange procession of two slowly moving along the edge of the plantation, a thick-set man in front smoking a pipe and something like a great gorilla stalking him from behind. This procession skirted the plantation nearly down to the gate; then it turned at right angles, following the line of trees that bordered the wall between the garden and the road; and then again at right angles when it had reached the farther corner of Mr Rattar's demesne. Simon was now in a secluded path with shrubs on either hand, and instead of continuing his tour, he turned at the end of this path and paced slowly back again. And seeing this, the ape behind him squatted in the shadow of a laurel and waited.

A steady breeze was now blowing and the trees were sighing continuously. The sky at the same time cleared, and more and more stars came out till the eyes of the man behind the bush could follow the moving man from end to end of the path. The wind made the pipe smoke quickly, and presently a shower of sparks showed that it was being emptied, and in a minute or two another match flashed and a second pipe glowed faintly.

Backwards and forwards paced the lawyer, and backwards and forwards again, but for the space of nearly an hour from his first coming out,

that was everything that happened; and then at last came a tapping of the bowl and more sparks flying abroad in the wind. The procession was resumed, Simon in front, the ape-like form behind, but with a greater space between them this time as the night was clearer, and now they were heading for the house. The lawyer's steps crunched lightly on the gravel again; the front door opened and closed, and Carrington was alone in the garden.

Still crawling, he reached the shelter of the belt of trees, and then rose and made swiftly for the gate, and out into the road. As he passed under a lamp, his face wore a totally new expression, compounded of wonder, excitement, and urgent thought. He was walking swiftly, and his pace never slackened, nor did the keenness leave his face, till he was back at the door of the King's Arms Hotel. Before he entered, he took off his hat and turned up the brim again, and his manner when he tapped at the door of the manageress's room was perfectly sedate. He let it appear, however, that he had some slight matter on his mind.

"What is the name of Mr Rattar's head clerk?" he inquired. "An oldish, prim-looking man, with side whiskers."

"Oh, that will be Mr Ison," said the manageress.

"I have just remembered a bit of business I ought to have seen about to-night," he continued. "I can't very well call on Mr Rattar himself at this hour, but I was thinking of looking up Mr Ison if I could discover his whereabouts."

"The boots will show you the way to his house," said she, and rang the bell.

While waiting for the boots, Mr Carrington asked another casual question or two and learned that Mr Ison had been in the office since he was a boy. "No man knew the house of Rattar throughout its two generations better than Mr Ison," said Miss Peterkin; and she remembered afterwards that this information seemed to give Mr Carrington peculiar satisfaction. He seemed so gratified, indeed, that she wondered a little at the time.

And then the visitor and the boots set out together for the clerk's house, and at what hour her guest returned she was not quite sure. The boots, it seemed, had been instructed to wait up for him, but she had long gone to bed.

XXXVI. THE WALKING-STICK.

Had there been, next morning, any curious eyes to watch the conduct of the gentleman who had come to rent a sporting estate, they would probably have surmised that he had found something to please his fancy strangely, and yet that some perplexity still persisted. They would also have put him

down as a much more excitable, and even demonstrative, young man than they had imagined. On a lonely stretch of shore hard by the little town he paced for nearly an hour, his face a record of the debate within, and his cane gesticulating at intervals.

Of a sudden he stopped dead, and his lips moved in a murmured ejaculation; and then, after standing stock-still for some minutes, he murmured again—

"Ten to one on it!"

His cane had been stationary during this pause. Now he raised it once more, but this time with careful attention. It was a light bamboo with a silver head. He looked at it thoughtfully, bent it this way and that, and then drove it into the sand and pressed it down. Though to the ordinary eye a very chaste and appropriate walking-stick for such a gentleman as Mr Carrington, the result of these tests seemed to dissatisfy him. He shook his head, and then with an air of resolution set out for the town.

A little later he entered a shop where a number of walking-sticks were on view, and informed the proprietor that he desired to purchase something more suitable for the country than the cane he carried. In fact, his taste seemed now to run to the very opposite extreme, for the points on which he insisted were length, stiffness, and a long and if possible somewhat pointed ferrule. At last he found one to his mind, left his own cane to be sent down to the hotel, and walked out with his new purchase.

His next call was at Mr Simon Rattar's villa. This morning he approached it without any of the curious shyness he had exhibited on the occasion of his recent visit. His advance was conducted openly up the drive and in an erect posture, and he crossed the gravel space boldly, and even jauntily, while his ring was firmness itself. Mary answered the bell, and her pleasure at seeing so soon again the sympathetic gentleman with the eyeglass was a tribute to his tact.

"Good morning, Mary," said he, with an air that combined very happily the courtesy of a gentleman with the freedom of an old friend. "Mr Rattar is at his office, I presume."

She said that he was, but this time the visitor exhibited neither surprise nor disappointment.

"I thought he would be," he confessed confidentially "and I have come to see whether I couldn't do something to help you to get at the bottom of these troublesome goings on. Anything fresh happened?"

"The master was out in the garden again last night, sir," said she.

"Was he really?" cried Mr Carrington. "By Jove, how curious! We really must look into that: in fact, I've got an idea I want you to help me with. By the way, it sounds an odd question to ask about Mr Rattar, but have you ever

seen any sign of a pipe or tobacco in the house?"

"Oh, never indeed!" said she. "The master has never been a smoking gentleman. Quite against smoking he's always been, sir."

"Ever since you have known him?"

"Oh, and before that, sir."

"Ah!" observed Mr Carrington in a manner that suggested nothing whatever. "Well, Mary, I want this morning to have a look round the garden."

Her eyes opened.

"Because the master walks there at nights?"

He nodded confidentially.

"But—but if he was to know you'd been interfering, sir—I mean what he'd think was interfering, sir——"

"He shan't know," he assured her. "At least, not if you'll do what I tell you. I want you to go now and have a nice quiet talk with cook for half an hour—half an hour by the kitchen clock, Mary. If you don't look out of the window, you won't know that I'm in the garden, and then nobody can blame you whatever happens. We haven't mentioned the word 'garden' between us—so you are out of it! Remember that."

He smiled so pleasantly that Mary smiled back.

"I'll remember, sir," said she. "And cook is to be kept talking in the kitchen?"

"You tumble to it exactly, Mary. If neither of you see me, neither of you know anything at all."

She got a last glimpse of his sympathetic smile as she closed the door, and then she went faithfully to the kitchen for her talk with cook. It was quite a pleasant gossip at first, but half an hour is a long time to keep talking when one has been asked not to stop sooner; and it so happened, moreover, that cook was somewhat busy that morning, and began at length to indicate distinctly that unless her friend had some matter of importance to communicate, she would regard further verbiage with disfavour. At this juncture Mary decided that twenty minutes was practically as good as half an hour, and the conversation ceased.

Passing out of the kitchen regions, Mary glanced towards a distant window, hesitated, and then came to another decision. Mr Carrington must surely have left the garden now, so there was no harm in peeping out. She went to the window and peeped.

It was only a two minutes' peep, for Mr Carrington had not left the garden, and at the end of that space of time something very disturbing happened. But it was long enough to make her marvel greatly at her sympathetic friend's method of solving the riddle of the master's conduct. When she first saw him, he seemed to be smoothing the earth in one of the flower-beds with his foot. Then he moved on a few paces, stopped, and drove his walking-stick hard into the bed. She saw him lean on it to get it further in and apparently twist it about a little. And then he withdrew it again,

and was in the act of smoothing the place when she saw him glance sharply towards the gate, and the next instant leap behind a bush. Simultaneously the hum of a motor-car fell on her ear, and Mary was out of the room and speeding upstairs.

She heard the car draw up before the house, and listened for the front-door bell; but the door opened without a ring, and she marvelled and trembled afresh. That the master should return in a car at this hour of the morning seemed surely to be connected with the sin she had connived at. It swelled into a crime as she held her breath and listened. She wished devoutly she had never set eyes on the insinuating Mr Carrington.

But there came no call for her, nor ringing of any bell; merely sounds of movement in the hall below, heard through the thrumming of the waiting car. And then the front door opened and shut again, and she ventured to the window. It was a little open, and she could hear her master speak to the chauffeur as he got in. He was now wearing, she noticed, a heavy overcoat. A moment more and he was off again, down the drive, and out through the gates. When she remembered to look again for her sympathetic friend, he was quietly driving his walking-stick once more into a flower-bed.

About ten minutes afterwards the front-door bell rang, and there stood Mr Carrington again. His eyes seemed strangely bright, she thought, but his manner was calm and soothing as ever.

"I noticed Mr Rattar return," he said, "and I thought I would like to make sure that it was all right before I left. I trust, Mary, that you have got into no trouble on my account."

She thought it was very kind of him to inquire.

"The master was only just in and out again," she assured him.

"He came to get his overcoat, I noticed," he remarked.

Mr Carrington's powers of observation struck her as very surprising for such an easy-going gentleman.

"Yes, sir, that was all."

"Well, I'm very glad it was all right," he smiled, and began to turn away. "By the way," he asked, turning back, "did he tell you where he is going to now?"

"He didn't see me, sir."

"You didn't happen to overhear him giving any directions to the chauffeur, did you? I noticed you at an open window."

For the first time Mary's sympathetic friend began to make her feel a trifle uncomfortable. His eyes seemed to be everywhere.

"I thought I heard him say 'Keldale House,'" she confessed.

"Really!" he exclaimed, and seemed to muse for a moment. In fact, he appeared to be still musing as he walked away. Mary began to wonder very seriously whether Mr Carrington was going to prove merely a fresh addition to the disquieting mysteries of that house.

XXXVII. BISSET'S ADVICE.

The short November afternoon was fading into a gusty evening as Ned Cromarty drew near his fortalice. He carried a gun as usual, and as usual walked with seven-league strides. Where the drive passed through the scrap of stunted plantation it was already dusk, and the tortured boughs had begun their night of sighs and tossings. Beyond them, pale daylight lingered, and the old house stood up still clear against a broken sky and a grey waste, with flitting whitecaps all the way to the horizon. He had almost reached the front door when he heard the sound of wheels behind him. Pausing there, he spied a pony and a governess car, with two people distinct enough to bring a sudden light into his eye. The pony trotted briskly towards the door, and he took a stride to meet them.

"Miss Farmond!" he said.

A low voice answered, and though he could not catch the words, the tone was enough for him. And then another voice said—

"Aye, sir, I've brought her over."

"Bisset!" said he. "It's you, is it? Well, what's happened?"

He was lifting her out of the trap, and not hesitating to hold her hand a little longer than he had ever held it before, now that he could see her face quite plainly and read what was within her eyes.

"I've dared to come after all!" she said, with a little smile, which seemed to hint that she knew the risk was over now.

"I advised her very strongly, sir, to come over with me to Stanesland," explained her escort. "The young lady has had a trying experience at Keldale, and forbye the fair impossibility of her stopping on under the unfortunate circumstances, I was of the opinion that the sea air would be a fine change, and the architectural features remarkably interesting. In fac', sir, I practically insisted that Miss Farmond had just got to come."

"Good man!" said Ned. "Come in and tell me the unfortunate circumstances." He bent over Cicely, and in a lowered voice added, "Personally I call 'em fortunate—so long as they haven't been too beastly for you!"

"It's all right now!" she murmured; and as they went up the steps he found, somehow or other, her hand for an instant in his again.

"If you'll stand by your pony for a moment, Bisset, I'll send out some one to take her," he said with happy inspiration.

But Mr Bisset was not so easily shaken off.

"She'll stand fine for a wee while," he assured his host. "You'll be the better of hearing all about it from me."

They went into the smoking-room, and the escort began forthwith.

"The fact is, Mr Cromarty, that yon man, Simon Rattar, is a fair discredit. Miss Farmond has been telling me the haill story of her running away, and your ain vera seasonable appearance and judicious conduct, sir; which I am bound to say, Mr Cromarty, is neither more nor less than I'd have expectit of a gentleman of your intelligence. Weel, to continue, Miss Farmond acted on your advice—which would have been my own, sir, under the circumstances—and tellt her ladyship the plain facts. Weel, then——"

"And what did Lady Cromarty say to you?" demanded Ned.

"Hardly a word. She simply looked at me, and said she would send for Mr Rattar."

Not a whit rebuffed, Mr Bisset straightway resumed his narrative.

"A perfectly proper principle if the man was capable of telling the truth. I'm no' blaming her ladyship at that point, but where she departit from the proper principles of evidence——"

"When did Rattar come?"

"This morning," said Cicely. "And—can you believe it?—he absolutely denied that he had ever advised me to go away!"

"I can believe it," said Ned grimly. "And I suppose Lady Cromarty believed him?"

"God, but you're right, sir!" cried Bisset. "Your deductions are perfectly correct. Yon man had the impudence to give the haill thing a flat denial! And then naturally Miss Farmond was for off, but at first her ladyship was no' for letting her go. Indeed, she went the length of sending for me, and telling me the young lady was not to be permitted to shift her luggage out of the house or use any conveyance."

"But Bisset was splendid!" cried Cicely. "Do you know what the foolish man did? He gave up his situation and took me away!"

Bisset, the man, permitted a gleam of pleasure to illuminate his blunt features; but Bisset, the philosopher, protested with some dignity.

"It was a mere matter of principle, sir. Detention of luggage like yon is no' legal. I tellt her ladyship flatly that she'd find herself afore the Shirra', and that I was no' going to abet any such proceedings. I further informed her, sir, of my candid opinion of Simon Rattar, and I said plainly that he was probably meaning to marry her and get the estate under his thumb, and these were the kind o' tricks rascally lawyers took in foolish women wi'."

"You told Lady Cromarty that!" exclaimed Ned. "And what did she say?"

"We had a few disagreeable passages, as it were, sir," said the philosopher calmly. "And then I borrowed yon trap, and having advised Miss Farmond to come to Stanesland, and she being amenable, I just brought her along to you."

"Oh, it was on your advice then?"

"Yes, sir."

Cicely and her host exchanged one fleeting glance and then looked extremely unconscious.

"She's derned wise!" said he to himself.

He held out his hand to the gratified counsellor.

"Well done, Bisset, you've touched your top form to-day, and I may tell you I've been wanting some one like you badly for a long while, if you are willing to stay on with me. Put that in your pipe, Bisset, and smoke over it! And now, you know your way, go and get yourself some tea and a drink of the wildest poison you fancy!"

Hardly was the door closed behind him than the laird put his fate to the test as promptly and directly as he did most other things.

"I want you to stop on too, Cicely—for ever. Will you?"

Her eyes, shyly questioning for a moment and then shyly tender, answered his question before her lips had moved, and it would have been hard to convince them that the minutes which followed ever had a parallel within human experience.

A little later he confessed—

"Do you know, Cicely, I've always had a funky feeling that if I ever proposed my glass eye would drop out!"

The next event was the somewhat sudden entry of Lilian Cromarty, and that lady's self-control was never more severely tested or brilliantly vindicated. One startled glance, and then she was saying, briskly, and with the old bright smile—

"A telegram for you, Ned!"

"Thanks," said he. "By the way, here's the future Mrs Ned — that's to say, if she doesn't funk it before the wedding."

Lilian's welcome, Lilian's embrace, and Lilian's congratulations were alike perfect. Cicely wondered how people could ever have said the critical things of her which some of her acquaintances were unkind enough to say at times. As to Bisset's dictum regarding the lady in the castle, that was manifestly absurd on the face of it. Miss Cromarty was clearly overjoyed to hear of her brother's engagement.

"And now, Neddy dear!" cried the bright lady, "tell me how it all came about!"

Ned looked up from his telegram with a glint in his eye that was hardly a lover's glance.

"Cicely will tell you all about it," said he. "I'm afraid I've got to be off pretty well as quick as I can."

He handed them the wire and they read — "Meet me eight to-night, King's Arms. Urgent. Carrington."

"From Mr Carrington!" exclaimed his sister.

Ned smiled.

"Cicely will explain him too," he said. "By Gad, I wonder if this is going to be the finishing bit of luck!"

In another twenty minutes the lights of his gig-lamps were raking the night.

XXXVIII. TRAPPED.

Cromarty and Carrington slipped unostentatiously out of the hotel a few minutes after eight o'clock.

"Take any line you like," said Carrington, "but as he knows now that you brought Miss Farmond back and have heard her version, he'll naturally be feeling a little uncomfortable about the place where one generally gets kicked, when he sees you march in. He will expect you to open out on that subject, so if I were you I'd take the natural line of country and do what he expects."

"Including the kicking?"

Carrington laughed.

"Keep him waiting for that. Spin it out; that's your job to-night."

"I wish it were more than talking!" said Ned.

"Well," drawled Carrington, "it may lead to something more amusing. Who knows? You haven't brought your own gun, I suppose? Take mine."

He handed him the same little article he had taken out the night before, and Ned's eye gleamed.

"What!" said he. "That kind of gun once more? This reminds me of old times!"

"It's a mere precaution," said the other. "Don't count on using it! Remember, you're going to visit the most respectable citizen of the town — perhaps on a wild-goose errand."

"I guess not," said Ned quietly.

"We daren't assume anything. I don't want to make a fool of myself, and no more do you, I take it."

"I see," said Ned, with a nod. "Well, I'll keep him in his chair for you."

"That's it."

They were walking quickly through the silent town under the windy night sky. It was a dark boisterous evening, not inviting for strollers, and they scarcely passed a soul till they were in the quiet road where the villa stood. There, from the shadows of a gateway, two figures moved out to meet them, and Cromarty recognised Superintendent Sutherland and one of his constables. The two saluted in silence and fell in behind. They each carried, he noticed, something long-shaped wrapped up loosely in sacking.

"What have they got there?" he asked.

"Prosaic instruments," smiled Carrington. "I won't tell you more for fear the gamble doesn't come off."

"Like the sensation before one proposes, I suppose," said Ned. "Well, going by that, the omens ought to be all right."

They turned in through Simon's gate and then the four stopped.

"We part here," whispered Carrington. "Good luck!"

"Same to you," said Ned briefly, and strode up the drive.

As he came out into the

gravel sweep before the house he looked hard into the darkness of the garden, but beyond the tossing shapes of trees, there was not a sign of movement.

"Mr Rattar in?" he inquired. "Sitting in the library I suppose? Take me right to him. Cromarty's my name."

"Mr Cromarty to see you, sir," announced Mary, and she was startled to see the master's sudden turn in his chair and the look upon his face.

"Whether he was feared or whether he was angered I canna rightly say," she told cook, "but anyway he looked fair mad like!"

"Good evening," said Ned.

His voice was restrained and dry, and as he spoke he strode across the room and seated himself deliberately in the armchair on the side of the fire opposite the lawyer.

Simon had banished that first look which Mary saw, but there remained in his eyes something more than their usual cold stare. Each day since Carrington came seemed to have aged his face and changed it for the worse: a haggard, ugly, malicious face it seemed to his visitor looking hard at it to-night. His only greeting was a briefer grunt than ordinary.

"I daresay you can guess what's brought me here," said Ned.

The lawyer rapped out his first words jerkily.

"No. I can't."

"Try three guesses," suggested his visitor. "Come now, number one——?"

For a moment Simon was silent, but to-night he could not hide the working of that face which usually hid his thoughts so effectually. It was plain he hesitated what line to take.

"You have seen Miss Farmond, I hear," he said.

"You're on the scent," said his visitor encouragingly. "Have another go!"

"You believe her story."

"I do."

"It's false."

Ned stared at him very hard, and then he spoke deliberately.

"I'm wondering," said he.

"Wondering what?" asked Simon.

"Whether a horse-whip or the toe of a shooting-boot is the best cure for your complaint."

The lawyer shrank back into his chair.

"Do you threaten me?" he jerked out. "Be careful!"

"If I threatened you I'd certainly do what I threatened," said Ned. "So far I'm only wondering. Where did you learn to lie, Mr Rattar?"

The lawyer made no answer at all. His mind seemed concentrated on guessing the other's probable actions.

"Out with it, man! I've met some derned good liars in my time, but you beat the lot. I'm anxious to know where you learned the trick. That's all."

"Why do you believe her more than me?" asked Simon.

"Because you've been found

out lying before. That was a pretty stiff one about your engaging Carrington, wasn't it?"

Simon was quite unable to control his violent start, and his face turned whiter.

"I—I didn't say I did," he stammered.

"Well," said Ned, "I admit I wasn't there to hear you, but I know Carrington made you put your foot fairly in it just by way of helping him to size you up, and he got your size right enough too."

"Then——" began Simon, and stopped and changed it into, "What does Carrington suspect—er—accuse me of?"

Ned stared at him for several seconds without speaking, and this procedure seemed to disconcert the lawyer more than anything had done yet.

"What — what does Carrington mean?" he repeated.

"He means you've lied, and he believes Miss Farmond, and he believes Sir Malcolm, and he believes me, and he puts you down as a pretty bad egg. What did you expect to be accused of?"

Simon could no more hide his relief to-night than he could hide his fears.

"Only of what you have told me — only of course of what you say! But I can explain. In good time I can explain."

It was at that moment that the door opened sharply, and the start the lawyer gave showed the state of his nerves after Mr Cromarty's handling. Mary MacLean stood in the doorway, her face twitching.

"What's the matter?" snapped her master.

"Please, sir, there are men in the garden!" she cried.

The lawyer leapt to his feet.

"Men in the garden!" he cried, and there was a note in his voice which startled even tough Ned Cromarty. "What are they doing?"

"I don't know, sir. It sounded almost as if they was digging."

Simon swayed for an instant and grasped the back of his chair. Then in a muffled voice he muttered—

"I'm going to see."

He had scarcely made a step towards the door when Cromarty was on his feet too.

"Steady!" he cried. "Get out there, and shut the door!"

The towering form and formidable voice sent Mary out with a shut door between them almost as the command was off his tongue. A couple of strides and he had got the lawyer by the shoulder and pulled him back.

"Sit down!" he commanded.

Simon turned on him with a new expression. The terror had passed away, and he stood there now as the sheer beast at bay.

"Damn you!" he muttered, and turned his back for a moment.

The next, his hand rose, and simultaneously Ned's arm shot out and got him by the wrist, while the shock of his onslaught drove the man back

and down into his chair. Though Simon was tough and stoutly built, he was as a child in the hands of his adversary. A sharp twist of the wrist was followed by an exclamation of pain and the thud of something heavy on the floor. Ned stooped and picked up the globular glass match-box that had stood on the table. For a few moments he stared at it in dead silence, balancing it in his hands. It was like a small cannon-ball for concentrated weight. Then in a curious voice he asked—

"Is this the first time you have used this?"

Simon made no reply. His face was dead white now, but dogged and grim, and his mouth stayed tight as a trap. Ned replaced the match-box on the table, and planted himself before the fire.

"Nothing to say?" he asked, and Simon said nothing.

They remained like this for minute after minute; not a movement in the room, and the booming of the wind the only sound. And then came footsteps on the gravel and the ringing of a bell.

"We'll probably learn something now," said Ned; but the other still said nothing, and only a quick glance towards the door gave a hint of his thoughts.

There was no announcement this time. Superintendent Sutherland entered first, then the constable, and Carrington last. The Superintendent went straight up to the lawyer, his large face preternaturally solemn. Touching him on the shoulder he said—

"I arrest you in the King's name!"

The man in the chair half started up and then fell back again.

"What for?" he asked huskily.

"The murder of Simon Rattar."

The lawyer took it as one who had seen the sword descending, but not so Ned Cromarty.

"Of Simon Rattar!" he shouted. "What the—then who the devil is this?"

Carrington answered. He spoke with his usual easy smile, but his triumphant eye betrayed his heart.

"The Superintendent has omitted part of the usual formalities," he said. "This person should have been introduced as Mr George Rattar."

"George!" gasped Ned. "But I thought he was dead!"

"So did I," said Carrington, "but he wasn't."

"What proof have you of this story?" demanded the man in the chair suddenly.

"We have just dug up your brother's body from that flower-bed," said Carrington quietly. "Do you recognise his ring?"

He held up a gold signet ring, and the lawyer fell back in his chair.

"But look here!" exclaimed Ned, "what about Sir Reginald's murder? He did that too, I suppose?"

Carrington nodded.

"We hope to add that to

his account in a day or two. This is enough to be going on with, but as a matter of fact we have nearly enough evidence now to add the other charge."

"I can add one bit," said Ned, picking up the matchbox. "He has just tried to do me in with this little thing, and I take it it was the third time of using."

Carrington weighed it in his hand, and then said to the prisoner—

"You put it in the end of a stocking, I suppose?"

The man looked up at him with a new expression in his eye. If it were not a trace of grim humour, it was hard to say what else it could be.

"Get me a drink," he said huskily, nodding towards the tantalus on the side-table, "and I'll tell you the whole damned yarn. My God, I'm as dry as a damned bone!"

"Give me the key of the tantalus," said Carrington promptly.

But the Superintendent seemed somewhat taken aback.

"Anything you say may be used against you," he reminded the prisoner.

"You know enough to swing me, anyhow," said Rattar, "but I'd like you to know that I didn't really mean to do it. I want that drink first though!"

He took the glass of whisky and water, and as he raised it to his lips that same curious look came back into his eyes.

"Here's to the firm of S. and G. Rattar, and may their clients be as damned as themselves!" he said with a glance at Cromarty, and finished the drink at a draught.

XXXIX. THE YARN.

"I needn't trouble you with my adventures before I came down here to visit brother Simon," began the prisoner, "for you know them well enough. It was about a month ago when I turned up at this house one night."

"How did you get here?" demanded the Superintendent.

"I did the last bit under the seat of the carriage," grinned Rattar, "and when we got into the station I hopped out on the wrong side of the train. The way I paid my fare wasn't bad either, considering I hadn't half of the fare from London in my pocket when I started—or anything like it. However, the point is I got here, and just as I'd come through the gates I had the luck to see both the maids going out. So the coast was clear."

"Well, I rang the bell and out came Simon—the man who'd got me convicted, and my own brother too, mind you!—looking as smug as the hard-hearted old humbug he was. He got the shock of his life when he saw who it was, but I began gently, and I put a proposition to him. I'll bet none of you will guess what it was!"

He looked round the company, and Carrington answered—

"Blackmail of some sort."

"You may call it blackmail if you like, but what was the sort? Well, you'd never guess. I was wearing a beard and moustaches then, but I knew if I took them off I'd look so like Simon that no one meeting one of us would know which it was, supposing we were dressed exactly alike and I did Simon's grunting tricks and all that. And Simon knew it too.

"'Well, Simon, my dear brother,' I said to him, 'I'll make you a sporting proposition. My idea is to settle down in this old place, and I'm so fond of you I mean to shave, get an outfit just like yours, and give free rein to my affection for you. I'm so fond of you,' I said, 'that I know I shan't be able to keep more than five yards away from you whenever you are walking the streets, and I'll have to sit in church beside you, Simon. That's my present programme.'

"I let that sink in, and then I went on—

"'Supposing this programme embarrasses you, Simon; well, there's one way out of it, and I leave it to your judgment to say what it is.'

"Now, mind you, I'd banked on this coming off, for I knew what a stickler Simon was for the respectable and the conventional and all that. Can't you see the two of us going through the streets together, five yards apart, and dressed exactly alike! Wouldn't the small boys have liked it! That was my only idea in coming down here. I meant no more mischief, I'll swear to that! Unfortunately, though, I'd got so keen on the scheme that I hadn't thought of its weak spot.

"Simon said not a word, but just looked at me—exactly as I've been looking at people since I took his place in society. And then he asked me if I was really very hard up. Like a fool I told him the plain truth, that I had inside of five bob in my pockets, and that was every penny I owned in the world.

He grinned then—I can see him grinning now—and he said—

"'In that case you'll have a little difficulty in paying your board and lodging here, and still more in buying clothes. I tell you what I'll do,' he said; 'I'll buy a ticket back to London for you and leave it with the stationmaster, and that's every penny you'll ever get out of me!'

"I saw he had me, but I wasn't going off on those terms. I damned him to his face, and he tried to shut the door on me. We were talking at the front door all this while, I may mention. I got my foot in the way, and as I was always a bit stronger than Simon, I had that door open after a tussle, and then I followed him into the library.

"I knew the man was hard as flint, and never showed mercy to any one in his life when he had them on toast,

and I knew he had me on toast. How was I to get any change out of him? That was what I was wondering as I followed him, and then all at once something—the devil if you like—put the idea into my head. I'd *be* Simon!"

He looked round on his audience as though he still relished the memory of that inspiration.

"The beauty of the idea was that no one would ever dream of suspecting a man of not being himself! They might suspect him of a lot of things, but not of that. I hadn't thought of the scheme ten seconds before I realised how dead safe it was so long as I kept my head. And I have kept it. No one can deny that!"

His glance this time challenged a contradiction, but no one spoke. The circle of steadfast eyes and silent lips he seemed to take as a tribute to his address, for he smiled and then went on—

"Yes, I kept my head from the beginning. I stood talking to him in this very room, he refusing to answer anything except to repeat that he'd buy a ticket to London and leave it with the station-master, and I working out the scheme—what to do it with and how to manage afterwards. I knew it was a swinging risk, but against that was a starving certainty, and then I spied that match-box and the thing was settled. I got him to look the other way for a moment—and then he was settled. Give me another drink!"

Carrington got him a drink and he gulped it down, and then turned suddenly on Ned Cromarty.

"Your damned glass eye has been getting on my nerves long enough!" he exclaimed. "My God, that eye and your habit of hanging people—I've had enough of them! Can't you turn it away from me?"

"Won't turn," said Ned coolly; "spring broken. Get on with your story!"

Even in his privileged position as prisoner, Rattar seemed disinclined to have trouble with his formidable ex-client. He answered nothing, but turned his shoulder to him and continued—

"After that was over I set about covering my tracks. The first part was the worst. Before the maids came back I had to get Simon stowed away for the night—no time to bury him then, of course, and I had to get into his clothes, shave, and learn the lie of the house and all that. I did it all right, and came down to breakfast next morning and passed muster with the servants, and never a suspicion raised!"

"There was a little," remarked Carrington, "but never enough."

"Not enough was good enough!"

"I'm not quite certain of that," said Carrington. "However, go on. Your next bunker was the office."

The prisoner nodded.

"It took some nerve," he said complacently, "and I'm free to confess that, to begin with, I always had a beastly

feeling that some one was watching me and spotting something that didn't look quite right; but, good lord, keeping my head the way I kept it, there was nothing to worry about! Who would ever think that the Simon Rattar who walked into his office and grunted at his clerks on Wednesday morning wasn't the same Simon Rattar who walked in and grunted on Tuesday morning? And then I had one tremendous pull in knowing all the ropes from old days. Simon was a conservative man, nothing was ever changed—not even the clerks—so I had the whole routine at my fingers. And he was an easy man to imitate too. That was where I scored again. I daresay I have inherited some of the same tricks myself. I know I found them come quite easy—the stare and the silence, and the grunts and the rest of them. And then I always had more brains than Simon, and could pick up business quicker. You should have heard me making that ass Malcolm Cromarty, and the Farmond girl, and this hangman with the glass eye, tell me all about themselves and what their business was, without their ever suspecting they were being pumped! For, mind you, I'd never set eyes on Malcolm Cromarty or the Farmond girl before in my life! No, it wasn't at the office I had the nastiest time. It was burying the body that night."

The boastful smile died off his lips, and for a moment he shivered a little.

"What happened about that?" inquired Carrington keenly.

Rattar's voice instinctively fell a little.

"When I got home that afternoon I found he wasn't quite dead after all!"

"That accounts for it!" murmured Carrington.

"For what?"

"Your maid heard him moving."

The prisoner seemed to have recovered from his passing emotion.

"And I told her it was a rat, and she swallowed it!" he laughed. "Well, he didn't move for long, and I had fixed up quite a good scheme for getting him out of the house. A man was to call for old papers. I even did two voices talking in the hall to make the bluff complete! Not being able to get his ring off his finger rather worried me, but I put that right by an advertisement in the paper saying I'd lost it!"

He was arrested by the look on Carrington's face.

"What happened?" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that gave me away?"

"Those superfluous precautions generally give people away."

"But how?"

"It doesn't matter now. You'll learn later. What next?"

"Next?" said Rattar. "Well, I just went on keeping my head and bluffing people," he broke off, looked at Superintendent Sutherland, and gave a short laugh. "I only lost my nerve a bit once, and

that was when the glass-eyed hangman butted in and said he was going to get down a detective. It struck me then it was time I was off—and what's more, I started!"

The Superintendent's mouth fell open.

"You—you weren't the man——" he began.

"Yes," scoffed the prisoner, "I was the man with toothache in that empty carriage. I'd got in at the wrong side after the ticket collector passed and just about twenty seconds before you opened the door. But the sight of your red face made me change my plans, and I was out again before that train started! A bright policeman you are! After that I decided to stick it out and face the music; and I faced it."

His mouth shut tight and he sat back in his chair, his eyes travelling round the others as though to mark their unwilling admiration.

He certainly saw it in the faces of the two open-eyed policemen, but Cromarty's was hard and set, and he seemed still to be waiting.

"You haven't told us about Sir Reginald yet," he said.

Rattar looked at him defiantly.

"No evidence there," he said with a cunning shake of his head; "you can go on guessing!"

"Would you like to smoke a pipe?" asked Carrington suddenly.

The man's eyes gleamed.

"By God, yes!"

"You can have one if you tell us about Sir Reginald. We've got you anyhow, and there will be evidence enough there too when we've put it together."

The Superintendent looked a trifled shocked, but Carrington's sway over him was by this time evidently unbounded. He coughed an official protest but said nothing.

The prisoner only hesitated for a moment. He saw Carrington taking out a cigarette, and then he took out his keys and said—

"This is the key for that drawer. You'll find my pipe and baccy there. I'll tell you the rest." And then he started and exclaimed, "But how the h—— did you know I smoked?"

"At five minutes past nine o'clock last night," said Carrington, as he handed him his pipe, "I was within three paces of you."

The prisoner stared at him with a wry face.

"You devil!" he murmured, and then added with some philosophy, "After all, I'd sooner be hanged than stop smoking." And with that he lit his pipe.

"You want to know about old Cromarty," he resumed. "Well, I made my first bad break when I carried on a correspondence with him which Simon had begun, not knowing they had had a talk between whiles cancelling the whole thing. You know about it and about the letter Sir Reginald sent me after I'd written. Well, when I got that letter I admit it rattled me a bit. I've often wondered since whether he had really suspected anything, or whether he would have sooner or later. Anyhow I got it into my head that the

game was up if something did not happen. And so it happened."

"You went and killed him?" said Ned.

"That's for you and your glass eye to find out!" snapped the prisoner.

"Take his pipe away," said Carrington quietly.

"Damn it!" cried Rattar, "I'll tell you, only I'm fed up with that man's bullying! I put it in a stocking" (he nodded towards the match-box), "just as you guessed, and I went out to Keldale that night. My God, what a walk that was in the dark! I'd half forgotten the way down to the house, and I thought every other tree was a man watching me. I don't know yet how I got to that library window. I remembered his ways, and I thought he'd be sitting up there alone; but it was just a chance, and I'd no idea I'd have the luck to pick a night when he was sleeping in his dressing-room. Give me another drink!"

Carrington promptly brought one, and again it vanished almost in a gulp.

"Well, I saw him through a gap in the curtains and I risked a tap on the glass. My God, how surprised he was to see me standing there! I grinned at him and he let me in, and then——" He broke off and fell forward in his chair with his face in his hands. "This whisky has gone to my head!" he muttered. "You have mixed it too damned strong!"

Ned Cromarty sprang up, his face working. Carrington caught him by the arm.

"Let's come away," he said quietly. "We've heard everything necessary. You can't touch him now."

Cromarty let him keep his arm through his as they went to the door.

"I'll send a cab up for you in a few minutes," Carrington added to the Superintendent.

They left the prisoner still sitting muttering into his hands.

XL. THE LAST CHAPTER.

On their way down to the hotel Ned Cromarty only spoke once, and that was to exclaim—

"If I'd only known when I had him alone! Why didn't you tell me more before I went in?"

"For your own sake," said Carrington gently. "The law is so devilish undiscriminating. Also, I wasn't absolutely certain then myself."

They said nothing more till they were seated in Carrington's sitting-room and his employer had got a cigar between his teeth and pushed away an empty tumbler.

"I'm beginning to feel a bit better," said he. "Fire away now and tell me how you managed this trick. I'd like to see just how derned stupid I've been!"

"My dear fellow, I assure you you haven't! I'm a professional at this game, and I tell you honestly it was at least as much good luck as good guidance that put me on to the truth at last."

"I wonder what you call luck," said Ned. "Seems to me you were up against it all the time! You've told me how you caught Rattar lying at the start. Well, that was pretty smart of you to begin with. Then, what next? How did things come?"

"Well," said Carrington, "I picked up a little something on my first visit to Keldale. From Bisset's description I gathered that the body must have been dragged along the floor and left near the door. Why? Obviously as a blind. Adding that fact to the unfastened window, the broken table, the mud on the floor, and the hearth-brush, the odds seemed heavy on entry by the window. I also found that the middle blind had been out of order that night, and that it *might* have been quite possible for any one outside to have seen Sir Reginald sitting in the room and known he was alone there. Again, it seemed long odds on his having recognised the man outside and opened the window himself, which, again, pointed to the man being some one he knew quite well and never suspected mischief from."

"These were always my own ideas, except that I felt bamboozled where you felt clear, which shows the difference between our brains!"

Carrington laughed and shook his head.

"I wish I could think so! No, no; it's merely a case of every man to his own trade. And as a matter of fact I was left just as bamboozled as you were. For who could this mysterious man be? Of the people inside the house, I had struck out Miss Farmond, Bisset, Lady Cromarty, and all the female servants. Only Sir Malcolm was left. I wired for him to come up, and was able to score him out too. I also visited you and scored you out. So there I was—with no conceivable criminal!"

"But you'd already begun to suspect Rattar, hadn't you?"

"I knew he had lied about engaging me; I discovered from Lady Cromarty that he had told her of Sir Malcolm's engagement to Miss Farmond, and I suspected he had started her suspicions of them; and I saw that he was set on that theory, in spite of the fact that it was palpably improbable if one actually knew the people. Of course if one didn't, it was plausible enough. When I first came down here it seemed to me a very likely theory, and I was prepared to find a guilty couple; but when I met Miss Farmond and told her suddenly that Sir Malcolm was arrested, and she gazed blankly at me and asked 'What for?' well, I simply ran my pencil, so to speak, through her name and there was an end of her! The same with Sir Malcolm when I met him. And yet here was the family lawyer, who knew them both perfectly, so convinced of their guilt that he was obviously stifling investigation in any other direction. And on top of all that, all my natural instincts and intuitions told me that the man was a bad hat."

"But didn't all that make you suspect him?"

"Of what? Of leaving his respectable villa at the dead of night, tramping several miles at his age in the dark, and deliberately murdering his own best client and old friend under circumstances so risky to himself that only a combination of lucky chances saw him safely through the adventure? Nothing — absolutely nothing but homicidal mania could possibly account for such a performance, and the man was obviously as sane as you or I. I felt certain that there was something wrong somewhere, but as for suspecting him of being the principal in the crime, the idea was stark lunacy!"

"By George, it was a tough proposition!" said Ned. "By the way, had you heard of George Rattar at that time?"

"Oh yes, I heard of him, and knew they resembled one another, but as I was told that he had left the place for years and was now dead, my thoughts never even once ran in that direction until I got into a state of desperation, and then I merely surmised that his misdeeds might have been at the bottom of some difficulty between Simon and Sir Reginald."

"Then how on earth did you ever get on to the right track?"

"I never would have if the man hadn't given himself away. To begin with, he was fool enough to fall in with my perfectly genuine assumption that he was either employing me or acting for my employer. No doubt he stood to score if the bluff had come off, and he banked on your stipulation that your name shouldn't appear. But if he had only been honest in that matter, my suspicions would never have started—not at that point anyhow."

"That was Providence—sure!" said Ned with conviction.

"I'm inclined to think it was," agreed Carrington. "Then again his advice to Sir Malcolm and Miss Farmond was well enough designed to further his own scheme of throwing suspicion on them, but it simply ended in his being bowled out both times and throwing the suspicion on himself. But *the* precaution which actually gave him away was putting in that advertisement about his ring."

"I was just wondering," said Ned, "how that did the trick."

"By the merest fluke. I noticed it when I was making inquiries at the police office on quite different lines, but you can imagine that I switched off my other inquiries pretty quick when Superintendent Sutherland calmly advanced the theory that the ring was stolen when Rattar's house was entered by some one unknown on the very night of the murder!"

"This is the first I've heard of that!" cried Ned.

"It was the first I had, but it led me straight to Rattar's house and a long heart-to-heart talk there with his housemaid. That was when I collected that extraordinary

mixed bag of information which I was wondering yesterday whether to believe or not. Here are the items, and you can judge for yourself what my state of mind was when I was carrying about the following precious pieces of information."

He ticked the items off on his fingers.

"A mysterious man, who entered the garden one night and left his footprints in the gravel, and whose visit had a strange and mysterious effect on Rattar. Funny feelings produced in the bosom of the housemaid by the presence of her master. Doors of unused rooms mysteriously locked and keys taken away; said to be old papers inside. Mysterious visit of mysterious man at dead of night to remove the said papers. A ring that couldn't come off the owner's finger mysteriously lost. Mysterious burglary on night of the murder by mysterious burglar, who left all windows and doors locked behind him, and took nothing away. Mysterious perambulations of his garden every night at nine o'clock by Mr Simon Rattar."

"Great Scot!" murmured Cromarty.

"I have given you the items in what turned out to be their order of date, but I got them higgledy-piggledy, and served up in a sauce of mystery and trembly sensations that left me utterly flummoxed as to how much—if anything—was sober fact. However, I began by fastening on to two things. The first was the burglary, which of course at once suggested the possibility that the man who had committed the crime at Keldale had returned to Rattar's house and got in by that window. The second was the nightly perambulations, which could easily be tested. When Mr Rattar emerged at nine that night, I was in the garden before him. And what do you think he did?"

"Had a look at his brother's grave?"

"Smoked two pipes of tobacco! A man who was an anti-tobacco fanatic! The truth hit me straight in the eye: 'That man is not Simon Rattar!' And then, of course, everything dropped into its place. The ex-convict twin-brother, the only evidence of whose suppositious death was an announcement in the paper, obviously put in as a blind. The personal resemblance between the two. All the yarns told me by the housemaid, including the strange visitor—George, of course, arriving; the man who came for the papers—George himself taking out the body; and the vanished ring. Everything fitted in now, and the correspondence between Sir Reginald and Rattar, which had beaten me before, gave the clue at once as to motive."

"I guess you felt you had deserved a drink that trip!" said Ned.

"I didn't stop to have my drink. I went straight off to see old Ison, and pumped him for the rest of the evening. He wasn't very helpful, but

everything I could get out of him went to confirm my theory. I found for certain that Simon Rattar had never smoked in his life, and that George used to be a heavy smoker. I also learnt that a few recent peculiarities of conduct had struck the not too observant Ison, one being very suggestive. Rattar, it seemed, kept an old pair of kid gloves in his desk, which he was in the habit of wearing when he was alone in the office."

"Don't quite see the bearing of that."

"Well, on my hypothesis it was to avoid leaving finger-marks. You see, George was an ex-convict. It was a very judicious precaution too, and made it extremely difficult to catch him out by that means, for one could scarcely approach a respectable solicitor and ask him for an impression of his fingers! And anyhow, nothing could be definitely proved against him until we had found Simon's body. That was the next problem. Where had he hidden it?"

"And how did you get at that?"

"Guessed it. At first my thoughts went too far afield, but when I went over the times mentioned in the maid's story of the man who took away the papers, and the fact that she heard no sound of a wheeled vehicle, I realised that he must have simply planted it in one of the flower-beds. This morning I prodded them all with a stout walking-stick and found the spot. Then I talked like a father to old Sutherland and fixed everything up with him. And then I sent my wire to you."

"And you deliberately tell me you got there as much by good luck as good guidance?"

Carrington's eyes thoughtfully followed his smoke-rings.

"I can see the luck at every turn," he answered, "and though I'd like to believe in the guidance, I'm hanged if it's quite as distinct!"

"If you are telling me the neat unvarnished truth, Carrington," said his admiring employer, "I can only say that you've a lot to learn about your own abilities—and I hope to Heaven you'll never learn it!"

"But I assure you there are some people who think me conceited."

"There are guys of all sorts in the world," said Ned. "For instance, there's a girl who has mistaken me for a daisy, and I 've got to get back to her now! Good-night! I won't say 'Thanks,' because I can't shout it loud enough."

When his gig-lamps had flashed up the silent street and Carrington had turned back from the pavement into the hotel, he met his friend Miss Peterkin.

"Mr Cromarty's late to-night," said she. "A fine gentleman that! I always say there are few like Mr Cromarty of Stanesland."

"That's lucky for me," said Carrington with a smile that puzzled her a little. "My business in life would be gone if there were!"

AN AIRMAN'S EXPERIENCES IN EAST AFRICA.

BY LEO WALMSLEY.

I. THE FIRST AERODROME.

MBUYUNI is pronounced Imbewni, and it means the place of an ostrich; it was therefore quite appropriate that Mbuyuni should be the first of the R.F.C. aerodromes in East Africa.

It is situated just on the British side of the international boundary, in the centre of the undulating bush-clad plain that spreads from the foot of Kilimanjaro, north-eastwards to the Uganda railway.

The Squadron to which I belonged arrived there by train late in the afternoon of February 1st, 1916, after a hot and tiring journey from the coast. We were led at once to our camping-ground, a large thorn-fenced square, just within the strongly defended perimeter of the main camp, and there we were left to shift for ourselves. We had no tents, and so with due philosophy we spread our valises on the ground, which from the entomological point of view promised to be of interest. Fortunately we had in the Squadron several "old" East Africans, and soon the various mess baskets were sorted out, a roaring camp fire made, and a rough but very acceptable meal prepared.

Before turning in an incident occurred that to some degree disturbed our peace of mind for the night. Our fire had been built near to one of the enormous ant-heaps found everywhere in this country which possess as a rule several large exits the size of a rabbit hole. Exasperated by the suffocating fumes of the dampish wood, suddenly there emerged from one of these holes an enormous snake about ten feet long, and as thick as one's arm. The native cook, who was busy stirring the contents of a saucepan over the fire, caught sight of this horrifying reptile, and letting out an awful blood-curdling shriek bolted as though the devil himself had suddenly appeared, shaping a headlong course through the mass of pots, pans, bottles and glasses, that littered the ground. The overturned pan naturally extinguished our sole source of light, and there we were in the dark with that beastly snake wriggling about in goodness knows what direction. Each of us thought he could feel it crawling about his legs, and never in my life have I seen a more utterly panic-stricken crowd of grown-up people. It took nearly a week's rum ration to restore the *morale* of the company, and we had just arrived at that stage where one begins

to tell the others "what a darned good joke it had been," when a piercing howl from the direction of the servants' quarters fairly made our hair stand on end. Seizing whatever weapon happened to be nearest to hand, we gallantly rushed to the rescue, and found Jones, our head servant, in a state of collapse. In vivid but highly descriptive Cockney, he told us that he was just getting into bed when "he put his hand right on it."

After a considerable amount of volunteering we stood round with our spades and bayonets, while one of us very gingerly raised the blanket, and there, nestling ever so comfortably underneath, was—an empty beer bottle!

As the night dragged on we had ample opportunities for studying the zoological and nocturnal wonders of East Africa.

The whole place swarmed with ants, and although they appeared to be of a harmless species, one never felt certain that it was not a centipede or a scorpion crawling across one's chest. The buzzing of the beetles and the chirping of countless crickets was almost deafening, and loud above their unmelodious din came the occasional roar of a lion, and the more frequent wail of the hyæna. Jackals, frogs, grasshoppers, and various smaller fry each contributed to this wild and primitive concert, which, strange to say, quickly lulled me off into a deep and dreamless sleep.

. . . . . .

It took several days to bring up the aeroplanes from Mombasa, unpack them from their wooden cases, and erect them ready for flight. The need for aerial reconnaissance behind the enemy's lines was hourly becoming more urgent, and as soon as the first machine was ready we were ordered out.

I shall never forget that first flight. The performance of the machine on its trial trip had been anything but satisfactory, and as I happened to be the lightest observer with the Squadron I was chosen for the job. The pilot, Captain Creed, was also a featherweight, but in spite of this we cleared the trees at the end of the aerodrome by inches only, and it was nearly half an hour before we reached a height of six hundred feet.

The view was extraordinarily interesting. The plain was much more open than we had at first imagined, for between the dense patches of bush were grassy glades dotted with solitary baobabs and acacias. Some of these open spaces were literally brown with game. On one of them was a herd of at least two hundred eland, and numerous odd groups of gazelle, hartebeeste, zebra, and giraffe were to be seen on the game paths which intersected the bush like the veins of a leaf. These paths seemed to converge on a small water-hole, where a couple of rhinos were disporting themselves. The noise of our engine drove them terror-stricken into the bush.

The scenery was magnificent. At the western extremity of the plain rose the mighty slopes of Kilimanjaro, its highest peaks floating on a great bank of cloud, its snow-fields and glaciers aglow in the evening sunshine. Further south the ragged cliffs and ridges of the Parè Hills leapt up from the plain, dark and portentous, for they formed the natural barrier between the British and the German Armies, and behind them lay the vital Tanga-Moschi Railway, which later became the main objective of General Smuts' Big Push.

Our orders were to locate a German force which was supposed to be marching on Mbuyuni. A squadron of horse and a few armoured cars had been sent out to engage it, and although we had little difficulty in spotting our own people—looking like so many ants creeping over the veldt—we saw no signs of the Hun. All the herds of game that we saw, however, were feeding peacefully, which certainly would not have been so had the enemy been anywhere near.

Turning now to the foot of the Parè Hills we flew over Lake Jipe, whose muddy, swampy waters swarm with crocodiles and hippos. A forced landing here would have been anything but a pleasant adventure, and I heaved a sigh of relief when we saw the land beneath us once more. We soon struck the main "road" (a path to be exact) that leads from Mbuyuni to Taveta and thence into German East Africa. This road was the key to the present military position, and was strongly defended by the Huns at Taveta and at Salaita, a small hill about fourteen miles west of Mbuyuni.

We had no difficulty in identifying Salaita Hill with its elaborate system of trenches and entanglements. Machine-guns and rifles flashed as we passed over at a thousand feet, and although I thought I could hear the bullets whizzing past, none hit us. It was very annoying having no means of retaliation, and as a small consolation I pulled out my Colt automatic and emptied the magazine at the hill. In an official *communiqué* some time later a gifted German journalist described how Salaita Hill had been attacked by an aeroplane with heavy machine-gun fire; there had been no casualties. I was somewhat annoyed about that.

The engine, which had been "missing" badly throughout the reconnaissance, stopped completely a quarter of a mile from the aerodrome; but we managed to glide in all right, and my pilot made a perfect landing. Later we heard that the alleged German force was only a small party of our scouts who had been seen by some of their own comrades; and this illustrates one of the many difficulties of the campaign. German troops wore practically the same uniform as our own, and it was impossible to distinguish between them at a few hundred yards. From the air the problem was even greater, and an

airman had to think twice before he dropped his bombs.

During the next few days more machines were erected, and frequent reconnaissances were made over the enemy's lines. The fortifications at Salaita and Taveta were sketched, photographed, and bombed whenever possible; although bombs were of little use against these carefully-made trenches, and it was only occasionally, when we caught a small body of Huns in the open, that we had any fun.

At Taveta we had to be extremely careful not to harm any of the native villages. The Wa-Taveta were friendly towards the British (apparently there is not a tribe in the whole of East Africa that is not), and they were patiently looking forward to the day when they would be released from the cruel tyranny and oppression of the Germans.

We were not permitted to bomb a wood occupied by the enemy, because on certain trees were hung the skulls of defunct members of the Wa-Taveta, the fall of which would bring bad luck to the tribe.

Sometimes our reconnaissances took us well up the slopes of Kilimanjaro, where the Huns had several outposts, one of them perched on the lip of an enormous extinct crater, now full of water. This crater-lake, known as Chala, actually contains crocodiles, although it is many hundred feet above the level of the nearest river—the Lumi.

The heat bumps and "pockets" at first were not quite so bad as we had anticipated. In the early morning and late evening the atmosphere is as steady as it is at home; but after 9 A.M. there is a certain amount of liveliness, particularly noticeable near the ground and under clouds. Later on in the campaign I formed a very wholesome respect for these unpleasant phenomena.

Possibly the best way of explaining their origin is to imagine the air as so much boiling water, with the earth acting as a giant stove, deriving its refracted heat from the sun. The air near the ground is heated strongly, becomes lighter, and rises as a more or less powerful current, while a similar current of cold air falls to take its place. An aeroplane flying into the first-named current is naturally lifted, while the downward current produces a dropping effect, or a so-called "pocket."

In addition to this there is the action of the ordinary wind, which sometimes transforms the upward currents into terrific eddies or whirlwinds, which suck up dust, sand, leaves, and branches to a great height. We had several experiences with these whirlwinds, or "dust devils," as they are called, later on.

Perhaps the greatest nuisance with which we had to contend was the insect life. I have already referred to the giant ant-heaps. Before our arrival many had been removed from the aerodrome, but soon these industrious little animals began to re-

assert themselves and build new heaps. In a single night they would produce a mound large enough to wreck a machine. It was not long before one of our hangars collapsed, the wooden pegs having been completely eaten away by termites, or white "ants." A colony of these little Huns attacked the legs of my camp-bed, but on the morning following the night of this tragic discovery I awoke to find that they had been raided by soldier ants, who had already formed up into a long column, and were marching away, each with two or three termites held in his pincers. I should like to take this opportunity of mentioning their gallant commanding officer in despatches.

The aero-engines seemed to have a fascination for all manner of wee beasts, which would crawl into any available orifice, frequently with disastrous results. This entomological offensive was by no means confined to the ground. In the air one had to keep a constant look-out for clouds of locusts which would have played havoc with the propellers; and swarms of bees were equally dangerous and unpleasant. The pilots' and observers' seats were favourite lurking-places for scorpions, tarantulas, and centipedes; and one always turned one's cushion over before one sat down.

In spite of these little unpleasantnesses, the work was very fascinating, and the time never palled. When flying was over, one could always wander out into the bush with a rifle or shot-gun, and be certain of, at any rate, seeing something of interest. The first thing about the "bush" that struck me was the deliciously sweet but evasive scent that everywhere pervaded the air. It reminded me strongly of meadow-sweet and May-blossom, and it would invariably conjure up disturbing memories of English lanes in summer-time, peace-time picnics, and tennis parties. I never traced its origin. If one walked through the occasional clumps of grass, bright-green grasshoppers would leap into the air like a shoal of flying-fish, and wing their way to the next patch of verdant cover. Scores of pretty lizards scuttled about in every direction. Snakes were not particularly abundant, but there was no shortage of tarantulas, centipedes, and scorpions, although even these required a certain amount of hunting, in the daytime at any rate. At night one was hunted.

Many of the largest bushes were decked, Christmas-tree fashion, with the curious purse-like nests of a species of weaver-bird, wonderfully designed to resist the special dangers of the country. The baobabs, too, usually possessed a colony or two of chattering green and blue parrots, whose screeching was deafening.

Game was abundant everywhere, and although, for military reasons, the use of high-powered arms was forbidden, one could get all the

sport one wished for with a ·22 rifle and a small-bored shot-gun. The long grass bordering the aerodrome teemed with quail, and spare-fowl, guinea-fowl, sand-grouse, greater and lesser bustard, haunted the adjacent bush. Within three miles of camp it was quite a common occurrence to see herds of gazelles, impala, geronuk, hartebeeste, eland, oryx, lesser kudu, zebra, giraffe, and ostrich, wart-hog, jackal, and, with luck, leopard, rhino, cheetah, and even lion. To the Serrengetti Plain was only two hours' walk, and this is one of the most famous lion districts in East Africa.

II. THE BIG PUSH STARTS.

Soon after the arrival of General Smuts the Big Push started. The enemy was manœuvred out of Salaita and Taveta, and after some very severe fighting our troops reached the Tanga-Moschi Railway, which, in an incredibly short space of time, was linked up with our own. In the middle of these operations I suddenly developed a bad attack of dysentery, and was sent back by ambulance train to Voi and thence to Nairobi. For nearly a month I hovered near the border-line, but, the climax once passed, the wonderful highland air quickly pulled me round. After a delightful week's holiday at the farm of Mr and Mrs Way, who treated me with that kindness and generosity which is typical of the East African settler, I returned to Mbuyuni, where I awaited orders to proceed to the new aerodrome at Kahe on the Tanga Railway. They came the evening of my arrival, and I prepared to leave on the following morning. The train was more or less up to time—i.e., only two hours late. Passenger coaches were unknown in those days, and as all the covered-in trucks were full, I had to climb up on to the roof of one of them. Peter, a native servant whom I had procured at Nairobi, fixed up my valise and pillows to make a comfortable seat, and but for the constant shower of red-hot cinders from the engine, it would have been an ideal trip. We arrived at Taveta late in the afternoon, and were told that the Kahe train would be leaving in half an hour. It left at eleven next morning. The first six miles or so from Taveta is a steep climb, but soon after we had passed the famous Latema Ridge where so many of our brave fellows had been killed, level country was reached, and our driver was able to get up speed. We were travelling now along the slopes of Kilimanjaro, the greater part consisting of open grassland, dotted here and there with dhum palms and baobabs. The line itself was still in a very bumpy condition, although every few miles we passed gangs of natives working at the various cut-

tings and embankments. We tore over one of the latter, doing well over forty miles an hour, and as we did so the whole line slipped sideways at least a foot. Goodness only knows why we didn't leave the track. At the next halt we rushed up to interview the Indian driver, and found him not in the least perturbed.

We arrived at Kahe late in the evening. What a change from Mbuyuni! The air was close and heavy with the almost overpowering smell of swamp. The trees were tall and the vegetation dense and green. Our aerodrome was situated within a few yards of the Pangani river, on ground which only a few weeks before had been swamp itself. It was still nearly all covered with rank grass, only a small portion having been cut to enable our machines to get to work as quickly as possible. Before the war the Germans had regarded Kahe as one of their most unhealthy stations, so we took every precaution so far as mosquito nets and quinine were concerned.

We became very busy indeed. The Huns had just been pushed out of a strong position at Samé on the railway, and were retiring rapidly towards Mombo, whence a light railway had been built nearly half-way towards the central line.

They were ripping up the line and destroying the bridges as they retired. Every day as we flew along we could see them at work, and several times we saw the actual explosion when they dynamited a water-tank or some other erection likely to be of use to us when we came into occupation. Some time later I met the German officer who had charge of the demolition party. He told me that as soon as an aeroplane was sighted the men immediately left their work and scattered in the bush. This manœuvre would have been successful if our shooting had been good. Instead of hitting the train, however, our bombs sometimes fell wide of the mark, thus often, quite unintentionally, doing some very effective damage. He told me also that one of our bombs had actually hit the engine of a train, blowing it to atoms, and killing the driver and several military passengers.

The scenery on these flights was very fine, particularly in the evening, when, our objective attained and reconnoitred, the machine would be turned for home.

The railway ran close to the foot of the Usambara Mountains, whose precipitous granite cliffs, glowing red in the sun's lowering rays, towered well overhead in spite of our great altitude. To the west stretched a level plain of open bush through which the Pangani river meandered like a mighty silver serpent making its weary way to the sea.

Although now nearly fifty miles away, Kilimanjaro still managed comfortably to block out one-third of the northern sky, and one's eyes were drawn towards it as by some magnetic influence.

The river Pangani proved to be an unending source of interest. Its banks were fringed with tall sycamore and mahogany trees, half hidden in a tangle of twisting creepers, in which played and chattered scores of pretty blackfaced, long-tailed monkeys. Here and there a gap in the foliage revealed the river itself, still turbulent and muddy from the rains. Gaily painted dragon-flies hovered over its surface. Above the incessant hum of countless insects could be heard the sweet twittering of the weaver-birds, whose long purse-like nests hung down from the trees near to the water. Brilliantly-plumed kingfishers darted here and there, or perched on the slender, gracefully-bending papyrus stems.

Now and again a great crocodile would float lazily past, its eyes and nose just visible above the surface. A large fish would break water just in front of it; then would come a mighty swish and a splash, and lower down stream the crocodile would suddenly appear again, just as though nothing had happened.

The Huns were too near to permit of shooting expeditions, so our sporting activities were directed to the more classical and far less energetic pastime of fishing. Unfortunately we had no hooks. We did not belong to the R.F.C. for nothing, however, and in his spare time one of our mechanics made some excellent substitutes from the piano wire used on the aeroplanes. Peter, who had fished in Uganda, and pretended to know all about it, made a good strong line from papyrus fibre, and with a long bamboo rod I soon had quite a respectable outfit.

Bait promised at first to be a problem. The South Africans suggested grasshoppers, but after a long and protracted hunt in the broiling sun, the net bag at the end of an hour standing at two and a half, I found that this was quite a sport in itself. Finally, I decided to test the respective luring capacities of raw meat and bacon fat. But there was no need for any test. I believe those beastly fish would have eaten their own tails had we been able to fix them on our hooks without their heads noticing it.

They were cat-fish—fat slimy brutes, with eel-like bodies and cavernous mouths full of cruel fangs, and fringed with whisker-like tentacles, which gave to the whole head a wonderful resemblance to our familiar pussy. They proved to be excellent eating, and made a welcome addition to our very limited menu.

All this time our infantry was pushing steadily on after the Hun down the east bank of the river. He persistently refused to give battle, and it soon became evident that his plan was to unite with the Wilhelmsthal and Tanga force, and then make for Morogoro, which had been made the political capital of G.E.A. since our warships had bombarded Daresalam. As the Hun re-

tired our flights naturally became longer and longer, and it was at last decided to move further down the river.

Early one morning our advance convoy, consisting of light tenders, set off for a new aerodrome which had been prepared at the site of an old Masai village near to the river and about fifty miles south of Kahe. There was no real road, only a native path or safari track, the surface of which had not been improved by the constant stream of heavy motor lorries carrying food and ammunition to the division ahead. The dust was terrible, and so fine that it penetrated our clothing, and formed a nasty muddy deposit on our perspiring bodies. Except in the immediate proximity of the river the country was very similar to that of Mbuyuni. The traffic had frightened the game, however, and the only living things to be seen were the vultures, and occasionally a pack of jackals squabbling over the remains of a dead mule or ox. The latter now became a very common sight, an eloquent testimony to the insidious ravages of the tetse-fly, which inhabits practically the whole of the low-lying districts of G.E.A.

We arrived late in the afternoon, and the machines landed just before dusk. During the next two or three days reconnaissances and bombing raids were carried out from sunrise to sunset. Not only had we to maintain a very watchful eye for signs of the retiring enemy, but in addition we had to keep the Commander-in-Chief informed daily as to the exact extent of our own advance. Unfortunately, on account of the aeroplanes, the Hun had taken to marching only by night. And it was rarely that we saw anything of real interest with the exception of his trenches and bridges. On the evening of the third day we received orders to move off once more, and on the following morning the personnel of the Squadron left by road.

My orders were to stay behind until the afternoon, when I was to go out on a long reconnaissance with Emmett, and land on our return at the new aerodrome, the position of which was indicated on the map.

We successfully reached our objective, but when we came to look for the aerodrome on our return not a sign of it could be seen. There was certainly a fine stretch of open country; but there are conventional devices for marking the actual landing-ground, and of these there was not the slightest sign. We came down to 200 feet in order to examine the ground more closely. I shall not forget that experience. The sun had been particularly hot all day, and numerous whirlwinds—many of which were powerful enough to suck up to a height of several hundred feet small bushes and broken branches of trees, dust, and heavy sand—travelled over the plain.

The effect of these dust-devils

on an aeroplane can be well imagined, and, as it was impossible to avoid them all, we began to have a very rough passage. The machine was tossed about like a feather, and suddenly, in the midst of it all, we were nearly shaken out of our seats by a fearful knocking in the engine. Emmett immediately switched off, as it became very obvious that one of the main bearings had fused. As luck would have it, we were then over a very bushy part, the only possible landing-place being a narrow patch of grass about one hundred yards long and fifty wide. Emmett judged it to an inch, and we came to rest without even scratching off a bit of varnish. The road was quite near, and in about an hour's time we heard the welcome sound of a car. It proved to be the last of our own convoy, and, fortunately enough, was laden with mess stores and our native cook. Leaving a selection of the stores with my pilot, who had to stand by his machine, I got into the car and we set off. We soon reached the open patch, where, we had been told, the new aerodrome would be. Here we found the A.D.C. and the Old 'Un sitting disconsolately in the shade of their machines waiting for something to happen. They were both very hungry and fed up at the same time, and a further disbursement of stores took place before I continued my journey. Hardly had we left them when, suddenly turning a corner in the road, we came across a number of ostriches enjoying a dust-bath. We stopped immediately, and I commenced to fumble for my camera. The cook, however, implored me not to risk so good an opportunity for securing fresh meat, which, he said, was far better than any buck. The sight of the fine tail-feathers more than answered any argument I might bring against this statement, and so, borrowing the driver's ·303, I shot the nearest cock. It took us nearly twenty minutes to chop off the two legs, the breast, the wings, and the tail. A leg was far more than the cook could lift unassisted.

We found the Squadron ten miles farther on, and soon a breakdown gang was despatched to Emmett, who turned up quite safely two days later.

The ostrich proved to be all that the cook had claimed for it, and in taste bore a very close resemblance to beef.

III. MALARIA.

Our new aerodrome was called Old Lassita, for no other reason than that this happened to be the only name on the map within a radius of twenty miles.

It created quite a record so far as mosquitoes went. As the Mess Sergeant aptly put it, "They fairly rolled you out of bed." Their activities were not confined to the

watches of the night either, and although this particular species was exonerated by the doctors of all blame for malaria, its bite proved to be extremely painful.

The Squadron was already beginning to pay heavily for its sojourn at Kahe. Man after man sickened and went down with malaria. We had no doctor with us; but Pawson,[1] who had some knowledge of medicine, took charge of the invalids and worked like a Trojan in their interest. Medicines were scarce, and of comforts there were none. For aspirin — an essential remedy in the treatment of malaria — we had to depend on private stocks, which were soon exhausted, and a man with a temperature of 105 degrees had to go without this merciful drug and suffer untold agonies.

It speaks well for Pawson's treatment and care that not a single case developed into black-water, the *bête noire* of the East African traveller.

On account of the mosquitoes we were not at all sorry to leave Old Lassita. The next camp was known officially as Kwa Lokua, but we soon changed that to "Daniel's Den." The district simply swarmed with lions, and it was impossible to sleep on account of the terrifying row they made every night. Dear old Batten, our adjutant, and K—— one of the equipment officers, had stayed behind at Old Lassita, and on the second day they arrived with an exciting story to tell. They had rigged up their beds the previous night with a space of about 10 ft. between them, had turned in early, and, tucked away inside their nets, were soon asleep.

Somewhere about midnight they were awakened by the familiar "cough, cough," and before they could rub the sleep from their eyes a huge lion walked serenely past between them. He made straight for the place where the men slept. Most of them were inside their cars, and to one of these old Leo went, and placing his great paws on the step peered in.

The mechanic asleep therein must have been an old soldier, for with a sigh of disappointment that nearly lifted the car from the ground, His Majesty walked on. The boys piled wood on their fires, and the adjutant and K——, so far recovered as to find their rifles, started to blaze away in the air with the object of frightening the great beast off. They were at last successful, but they spent the remainder of the night huddling in their blankets before the fire.

It must have been a reaction, for one night some time after this, when every one was fast asleep and things were particularly quiet and peaceful, K—— suddenly leapt out of bed with a blood-curdling shriek,

[1] Dear old Pawson died only a few months ago of disease contracted in East Africa. As a gallant officer, gentleman, and, above all, as jolly good pal, his memory will be ever fresh in the hearts of all those who knew him.—L. W.

and seizing his revolver began to fire away as though all the lions in Africa were after his blood. In subsequent camps we always gave K—— the advantage of any cover there might be.

We spent nearly a week at "Daniel's Den," during which time we constantly reconnoitred the country as far south as Mombo, the railway base for the famous Wilhelmsthal agricultural settlement. The Huns had put up a fight at a position which they had prepared at the point where the Pangani almost touches the line. We had been the first to discover the existence of this position, and a detailed map of it had been handed in to the Staff some days before our infantry attacked. Here also they had built a bridge, which they had time only partially to destroy. They were now making rapidly for Mkalamo and then Handeni, where they hoped to join up with their other force. Everything was in their favour. Owing to the dense bush a flanking movement on our part was a sheer impossiblity. The Hun was not dependent upon mechanical transport, but travelled lightly and swiftly, and moreover had the advantage of knowing every inch of the country.

It was a case of jogging on stolidly behind and fighting just when and where our friends the enemy thought fit.

I had an exciting experience flying over Mkalamo. I was up with poor old Bertram, whose tragic death only a few days later cast a black gloom over the whole Squadron. We were flying moderately low, and I was leaning out taking a photograph, when a terrific bump caught our right wing. In a second we were in a nose-dive, spinning as we went earthwards like a leaf falling from a tree. It was a horrible sensation. My belt, of course, was unfastened, and while I hung on like grim death to the struts, my map, notes, and photographic plates went streaming out behind like a paper-chase. Bertram, however, kept his head splendidly. Switching off his engine as soon as the spin commenced, he at last managed to pull her out, not, however, until we were hardly more than 800 feet above the Huns. They must have been disappointed, for later our scouts reported that we had been fired on continuously, and they must have concluded that they'd hit the bull when they saw us coming down. I often wonder if they found my notes. I should have liked very much to have seen their Chief Intelligence Officer trying to puzzle them out. Usually, it was more than I could do myself!

Before leaving Kwa Lokua I had several unsuccessful lion hunts. On one occasion I found the carcase of a hartebeeste still warm, and although we followed the spoor of the lion for nearly six miles, we never got a glimpse of him. The bush was too thick. My only decent bag was a rather good ram geronuk, a smallish antelope with an extraordinarily long neck and curious

crumpled horns. The latter I kept.

On June 11th the Squadron packed up and set off once more. As before, I had to stay behind, do a reconnaissance, and land at the new aerodrome. The reconnaissance had to be abandoned owing to the heavy clouds that hung low over the German positions. However, we landed safely at the new camp, and making ourselves comfortable, awaited the arrival of the convoy. It turned up late in the afternoon—every one hot, thirsty, bad-tempered, and thick with the red dust of the road. There's nothing like an aeroplane for this country.

The aerodrome was a narrow strip of plain bordering on the west bank of the river. Here and there grew solitary dhum palms, and as there was a reference to these trees on the map the camp was promptly labelled Palms. Once out of the actual basin of the river, the bush became particularly dense, and the ground covered with fiendish bayonet cactus. Only once did I try to cross a clump of this innocent-looking stuff. I'd as soon tackle Kilimanjaro any day. The plant consists of a thick fleshy and springy stem about two feet high, quite smooth, but ending in a sharp caloified point. As the victim moves he presses forward the stem, which bends like a hazel wand. As another step is taken this is released and flies back, usually inflicting a nasty wound in his calf. For this reason, therefore, there was very little shooting at Palms. The river was too turbulent for fishing, and the time commenced to hang very heavily. Quite close to the camp was a small Masai village. The headman used to come and see us every day, and expressed great marvel at our machines. He was vastly astonished when I told him that the cost of an aeroplane was at least £2000. Working it out in cattle and wives, the niggers' Alpha and Omega, we calculated that out of that sum he could settle down with 500 of the former and 1500 of the latter. Cattle, he said, were slightly more expensive these days.

The Masai are anything but the savage warlike tribe the missionary at home used to picture them. I never heard of one being enlisted in the King's African Rifles, and the A.D.C. described them as a filthy, covetous, and untrustworthy race well on the way to degeneracy.

In a few days our people occupied Mkalamo, after a fierce scrap in the bush, in which they never caught as much as a glimpse of the enemy. This was ideal country from the point of view of the retiring force. The Germans could prepare a position astride the road they knew our infantry must take, conceal their rifle-pits and machine-gun emplacements under bushes and amongst the grass, and taking us by surprise, pour a deadly fire into our midst and retire ere we had time to recover from our natural confusion. This

was the type of fighting that obtained throughout the campaign, and one in which the Hun obviously held the advantage.

This time he had escaped with a few casualties, and we were soon in hot pursuit down the trolley line that led from Mkalamo to Handeni.

I was sent to Mkalamo to report on a possible aerodrome. The only likely place was a lawn-like patch on the Pangani, and only twenty miles from Palms. This, however, would mean a considerable saving on our reconnaissances, and so I was ordered to prepare it with the forty boys placed at my disposal and in charge of Sergeant Adams. It was quite good fun being on one's own. I made a cosy little bivouac by cutting a hole into a very dense mass of bush. Peter proved to be quite a passable cook, and he produced fresh milk, eggs, chickens, and fish from a neighbouring village.

Guinea-fowl were quite common near the camp, and one evening a flock of about one hundred alighted on the very bush in which my "bivvy" was made. It was fine sport shooting them with rifles, and we got enough to send back to Palms with a passing car.

One morning all the boys were busy cutting long grass on the aerodrome. Taking the rifle, I strolled down towards the river. Suddenly a large reed-buck got up at my feet. I fired, but missed badly, and away the animal went straight towards where the boys were working. A buck cannot run in long grass—it bounds, very much like a kangaroo. I daren't risk another shot because of the boys, but I shouted, wishing them to turn it back and give me another chance. They, however, mistook my shout for a cry of warning, and seeing something big and brownish leaping towards them, several of them screamed "Simba! Simba!" (Lion! Lion!), and throwing down their tools, the whole gang bolted for their lives. They were horribly shamefaced when they found out what it was, yet they appreciated the joke immensely. A nigger possesses a very keen sense of humour.

At last the aerodrome was finished, and I got orders to return to Palms. On the way there I managed to bag a pair of young geronuk, both without horns. The second one I shot with my revolver, as I had used up all my ammunition shooting guinea-fowl.

On my arrival I found that my aerodrome[1] was not to be used, as one had been found near Handeni. We set off about four the next afternoon. It was quite dark by the time we reached Mkalamo, but as our orders were to reach the camp that night, we lit our lamps and pushed on. The road was simply vile—a mere clearing through the bush. It was horribly cold, too, and at Luchumu, a large native

[1] Known unofficially as Walmsley's Folly.

village on the river, we stopped and made coffee. This was the last we were to see of the dear old Pangani. Most of us had grown quite fond of its brown muddy waters and picturesque banks. Like the sea, there is something almost human about a river, and I, at any rate, felt that I was losing a friend.

It was nearly midnight when we arrived, and without troubling to prepare any food, we spread our valises on the ground and were soon fast asleep.

IV. MBAGUI AND BACK TO MOMBASA.

Mbagui, as our new camp was called, proved to be quite different from anything we had yet struck in East Africa. The aerodrome was a miniature plain, the whole of which had at one time been under cultivation—a fact we were soon to discover to our sorrow, for the old furrows made the immediate arrival of the machines an utter impossibility. It was a stupendous job levelling the ground, for there had been no rain for months, and the soil was baked stone hard. Help, however, was forthcoming from the local village, whose inhabitants were only too glad to have an opportunity of doing something "anti-Hun." The latter had taken or destroyed all their cattle and live stock, and had wantonly razed every blade of corn and maize to the ground, and in payment had palmed off on to them several pounds' worth of "dud" coinage.

Except for the plain, the whole country, so far as eye could see, was clad in stunted forest. There was no thorn except for an occasional "ebony" bush, neither were there any palms or baobabs. It reminded one more of a young English oak forest. There was certainly nothing tropical about it.

Water promised to be our chief problem. The village depended for its supply upon a hole dug in the dried-up bed of a tributary of the Pangani. The passage of several thousand troops during the last week had not tended towards improving either the quantity or quality of this supply. There was nothing left now but a filthy evil-smelling syrup, which, even with tea or strong coffee, made one ill. The only possible way of getting it down was to hold one's nose, as our parents did in the days of Gregory powders and castor-oil.

We tried digging fresh holes, but with little success, and it was not until our worthy sergeant-major, an old South African engineer, set to work that life became possible once more. Some say that, having been a staunch blue-ribbon advocate all his life, he had acquired a sixth sense for the divine fluid; anyway, it was entirely due to his individual effort that an unending supply of cool clean water was ensured for the Squadron dur-

ing its lengthy stay at this place.

It was nearly a week before the machines arrived, and the ground even then was so rough that several of them were slightly damaged in landing. We started work immediately they were repaired.

There had been some very fierce fighting of late, and the Hun was busy preparing a very strong position at Ruhungu, a mountain spur butting on to the Morogoro Road, about forty-five miles from Mbagui. He had been strongly reinforced from Tanga and Wilhelmsthal (which were now ours), and also from Morogoro, and rumour had it that this was to be his last stand. Smuts, who was sitting down in front of the Hun, had sent his mounted troops off on a cleverly-planned flanking movement through the Nguru Mountains on the enemy's left.

One of the dreariest phases of the whole campaign followed. The country to be traversed by the mounted troops was extraordinarily difficult. There was no definite road, the bush was extraordinarily dense, the paths in some places so steep that it became little short of mountaineering. It was impossible to send up continuous supplies, and as the country had already been depleted of food by the Huns, our men were practically starving. All this time our main force was being shelled daily by the enemy's long-range guns, which had been removed from the *Königsberg*. Our reconnaissances, too, became anything but pleasant. It took us quite an hour to reach the German lines, and on the way there was not a single open patch large enough for a tennis-court, let alone an aerodrome. And even after making this dreary trip, it frequently happened that the whole of the enemy's country was clothed in dense low clouds, rendering observation impossible.

We had to reconnoitre not only the German position at Ruhungu, but also the country for many miles behind. The motor road as far as Turiani had to be watched for signs of traffic, although the most that I ever saw was a group of three white Germans mounted on bicycles, who fled into the jungle at our approach. Even the scenery palled at times, and then I used to while away the time writing letters or reading novels. In this way I read through the whole of Rider Haggard's 'Ayesha'; and it was certainly unique to look over the side and see dismal swamps, mysterious rivers, purple hills, similar in every respect to those around which this romantic story is woven.

The villagers at Mbagui were quite interesting. They were Swahili, with a dash of Masai in their blood; but they possessed few of the unpleasant characteristics of the latter, and they worked splendidly on the aerodrome.

When this was completed they gave us an *n'goma* or dance. It was a weird affair, and quite clever in its way.

Only the men participated, and their grotesque movements were supposed to be a representation of the ostrich. To give a touch of reality to the effect, tufts of feathers were fastened to their heads, shoulders, and hips; and although their interpretation was not exactly Pavlovic, it was extraordinarily good, and I have never seen an *n'goma* to compare with it anywhere else in Africa.

We had been at Mbagui a fortnight when I got my first attack of malaria, and I was sent back to Mbuyuni. By the time I arrived there the fever had abated, and after a couple of days in hospital I was sent down to Mombasa for a week's seaside treatment. Mombasa proved to be a delightful old town, and I never tired of exploring its picturesque old streets and bazaars. It is typically Eastern, yet quite free from the unpleasant odours and crowds of pestering children so characteristic of the Egyptian towns. I made several trips to the coral reefs to the north of the harbour. Here there were some perfectly fascinating sea-gardens, crowded with all manner of strange beasts. Great sea-worms twisted amongst the tangle of brightly-coloured weeds; there were sea-urchins which shot out their long needle-like spines at a touch; there were huge star-fishes—blue, yellow, and red; and their cousins, the fragile brittle-stars, which think less of losing a limb than a man would of sneezing; and there were gorgeous sea-anemones and exquisitely moulded corals, gaudily painted fish, dainty crustaceans, sea-slugs, sea-cucumbers, sponges, and all manner of shellfish, the beauty and form of which defy description.

I tried to get a trip in one of the tiny fishing craft that are sailed out so skilfully into the teeth of the great monsoon rollers, and then into the quiet waters sheltered by the barrier reef. The fishermen wouldn't risk it, however, and I had to content myself with Mombasa harbour, which, I firmly believe, didn't contain a single fish. When at the end of two hours I vented this theory to the Swahili boatman, he merely grinned and remarked, "Shauri ya munguu" (It is the affair of Allah); which I thought very cool, after he'd sworn that we'd catch a bucketful in an hour. His optimism faded somewhat when I told him that the matter of payment was also to be "an affair of Allah."

Peter, who during the last few weeks had shown signs of a very common complaint among our boys—home-sickness—fell really ill, and I had to pack him off to hospital. This was somewhat of a nuisance; but just as the train was steaming off, an extremely ferocious-looking youth with filed teeth came up and offered his services. The teeth did it—and that was how I came to hire the priceless Maganga, who stuck to me throughout the campaign and proved to be a most faithful slave.

V. BACK TO THE FRONT.

I arrived at Mbagui a week or so later, and was soon at work again on the same old reconnaissance. There had been little change in the situation during my absence. The Ruhungu fortifications had been elaborated to some extent, and the line now extended from the mountains to a large swamp through which our troops could not possibly pass. The shelling by the *Königsberg* gun still continued at intervals, but it was never fired when we were near. At Turiani, a very ancient field-gun had been mounted as an "Archy," and it was very amusing to fly over and watch the German gunners trying to keep their sights on us as we dived and spiralled. We had a very wholesome respect for their machine-guns, however, of which there seemed to be no scarcity.

So far I had been very lucky in regard to forced landings, the engine usually failing within gliding distance of the aerodrome or open country. On one occasion, however, something went wrong when we were nearly twenty miles away on the outward journey. The pilot turned immediately, but we had already lost a thousand feet. There was not a square yard of open country nearer than Mbagui, and although the engine kept picking up for a minute or so, it soon became apparent that we were in for a crash. For twenty minutes we struggled on, and then at last the beastly thing "konked" altogether, and we immediately became keenly interested in the botany of the country beneath. The pilot did the only possible thing—skimmed the tops of the trees until the machine commenced to lose flying speed, then turned her nose up so that she pancaked. The observer is privileged to close his eyes when the final crash comes, and so curling up my legs I waited without enthusiasm for the fireworks. There was a most fearful sound of cracking timber and tearing fabric, and then a wonderful sense of stillness. It was all over, and barring a few odd thorns in all sorts of indescribable regions of our anatomy from the trees we had pruned, neither of us was a bit the worse. Hardly a square yard of the aeroplane was left intact.

We had landed in an inhabited part, and in a few minutes were surrounded by hundreds of awe-stricken natives. With an ever-ready eye for business, they were soon collecting the odd bits of fabric which decorated the forest for a considerable distance around. We were not such asses as to allow that, however; and so, reclaiming everything, we established a market, and were soon doing a brisk trade in chickens, eggs, and milk. To the headman we gave the gaudy identification mark used on all British aeroplanes, which with great

pride he promptly used to adorn his person. Taking a native as a guide, I walked back to the camp, a distance of about eight miles, and soon a party was sent out to salve any serviceable parts left of the machine.

Two days after news came in that the Huns had evacuated their position at Ruhungu, and, safely dodging the mounted troops who had by this time got well in behind them, were now making a hasty retreat to Morogoro. Our whole force was hot on their track. A possible aerodrome being reported some miles beyond Ruhungu, I was ordered to take up a small convoy and relieve our forward officer. I set off with three cars and twenty or thirty boys. It took nearly an hour to reach Handeni. This is one of the military posts which the Hun had established throughout the colony during his wars with the natives. They consist usually of a strongly-barricaded stone-built fort, or Boma, and accommodation for a company or so of native troops and their white officers.

Leaving Handeni, we drove along what had once been a very fine motor road, but which had already been badly cut up by our heavy transport. For the first few miles we passed through dense bush, but this, farther on, gave way to magnificent forest, which continued for nearly forty miles. Some of the trees were an enormous height, and were it not for the costly problem of transport, the value of the timber alone would run into millions. The scenery was very fine. There was a remarkable scarcity of animal life, however. There were no birds, and the dead silence of the forest was uncanny. Perhaps the entire absence of game might be explained by the myriads of tsetse-fly (*G. morsitans*), which viciously attacked all our animals. Humans were by no means immune, and whenever we halted they descended on us immediately. Their sharp proboscis will penetrate even a drill-jacket and shirt, and the stab they give is very painful, and in some people raises a nasty lump, which frequently turns septic.

I did not hear of any cases of sleeping-sickness in the district, although this species is now supposed to be equally to blame with its cousin, *G. palpalis*, for the carrying of the deadly trypanosoames.

In the evening we reached the Lukigura river. It appeared to be little more than a collection of dirty greenish pools, seething with tadpoles and minute animal life. There were at least fifty dead oxen and mules lying rotting in the river-bed, and the prospect of spending the night in such salubrious surroundings filled me with horror. It was too dark to push on, for the road was very dangerous, so we had to make the best of it.

No one felt in the least like breakfast next morning, and we set off before the sun had risen. There is something particularly exhilarating in

the sharp, almost frosty early morning air in East Africa. Usually it gave me a violent attack of home-sickness, and the first half-hour or so on the road I would pass in a sort of day-dream. The trees and grass sparkle with dew, which is sufficiently heavy to lay the dust, that later becomes so unpleasant.

Leaving the so-called river, we struck out towards the foot of the Nguru Mountains. Soon we reached the famous Shell Camp, where the big German guns had given our force a most annoying two months, and we were not long in sighting the elaborate field-works of the Ruhungu position. Here we stopped for some coffee and a light breakfast. It was very interesting to examine the trenches and investigate various structures which had puzzled us greatly from the air. There was not time to walk round the whole system, however, and soon we were on the road once more. About half an hour's run from Ruhungu we turned off from the main road and struck out in an easterly direction. The going became perfectly appalling. The track was very narrow, half-grown over with rank elephant-grass, and overhung with bush and creepers. There were no bridges over the numerous watercourses, and in places we had to cut down branches and grass to spread on the soft sand to prevent our cars from sinking axle-deep. By the time we sighted the aerodrome — Komsanga — it was nearly dark. It appeared that we were quite near to the Wami river, across which we were building a bridge to enable part of the main body to carry out a flanking movement on the enemy's right. A company of the latter was sitting watching us only six miles away.

(To be continued.)

A WOMAN—TO WOMEN.

THE year 1920 will be a very important and memorable one for the women of Scotland. In that year they will be called upon to decide one of the most momentous questions that can possibly arise — namely, the manner in which the liquor trade shall in the future be conducted in Scotland. The Bill which gives them this power, and with which we have to concern ourselves now, is called "The Temperance (Scotland) Act, 1913," and it provides that it shall come into force at the expiration of eight years from the first day of June 1912—that is, on the first day of June 1920. Any one can obtain a copy of it from His Majesty's Stationery Office, 23 Forth Street, Edinburgh, price twopence (2d.) The electors who will vote on this Bill will be the Local Government electors. The number of men Parliamentary electors in Scotland is roughly 1,390,000, and the number of women electors 817,000. No statistics are available of the number of Local Government electors, but it is probable that the women Local Government electors will be rather more than the Parliamentary electors, as they have the vote at twenty-one years instead of thirty years of age. We can, therefore, judge what an immense influence the women's vote will have on this question, and how much it behoves us to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the matters to be decided. How momentous this question is can be seen from what is at present going on in the United States of America.

Quite recently it was announced that the great majority of the States which compose the United States of America had decided to forbid the sale, the manufacture, or the importation of any alcoholic drink. This announcement fell like a bombshell on this country. It seemed impossible that the American nation could consent to such restriction of their freedom. We will consider presently what reasons have led them to adopt such an astonishing course of conduct, which the Archbishop of Canterbury describes as one of the most remarkable episodes in the whole history of social reform. At present we must consider the course the women of Scotland are likely to pursue in the struggle which will assuredly take place between the liquor trade and the people.

This Scotch Bill, which was carried through the Houses of Parliament, provides that Scotland shall be divided into areas. The areas to be marked out are burghs or towns, and in the country parishes; and the Local Government electors in these areas shall have powers to deal with the management of the liquor trade in their areas.

Upon the demand of one-tenth of the electors in any area a poll shall be taken, at which the electors will be allowed to vote for any one of the three following resolutions, which we will consider in detail further on:—

1. No change in present management.
2. To close one-fourth of the public-houses.
3. Prohibition of the sale of drink.

The demand for a poll to be taken shall be as follows:—

"We, the subscribers hereto, being electors in (here insert the name of the area), do hereby demand a poll under the terms of the Temperance (Scotland) Act, 1913." The signatures to the said demand shall be attached to it with the full addresses of those signing, and it shall be written on papers which shall be issued by the Clerk to the Local Authority on the demand of any elector. The Clerk is not to issue these papers until the 15th day of August, and the requisition shall be lodged during the month of September, and the Clerk to the Local Authority shall thereupon insert in not less than two newspapers circulating in the area a notice that he has received such a requisition, and shall allow the inspection of the requisition by any elector, but after the requisition has been so lodged no signatures thereto may be withdrawn.

A poll shall be taken on any day, not being a market day, which the local authority may fix in the month either of November or December immediately following the lodging of the requisition.

If fifty-five per cent at least of the votes recorded are in favour of a no-licence resolution, and not less than thirty-five per cent of the electors for such area on the register have voted in favour thereof, such resolution shall be deemed to be carried. If a majority of the votes recorded are in favour of a limiting resolution, and not less than thirty-five per cent of the electors for such area on the register have voted in favour thereof, such resolution shall be deemed to be carried.

Whatever the result, a further poll shall not be taken before the month of November in the third year from the date of the last poll.

It is well to have these points clearly set out. Acts of Parliament are drawn up in such a complicated phraseology that readers, who often have not the time at their command to pick out the meaning of them, either do not apprehend them at all or have a confused impression.

We will now consider the first choice, namely, to allow things to remain as they are—which means, as they were before the war. To any one who followed the course of the war and remembers the dangers which beset us at the beginning owing to the special temptations to drink which were put before our soldiers and sailors, it will be unthinkable that there should be any proposal to return to the state

of things which existed at that time, and which the first choice would re-establish.

It was found that we were allowing a private trade to hold back ships and shells and guns and men, for want of which disaster threatened us. The Government saw that drink was interfering with the Army; it was causing grave delay with munitions; it was robbing workshops of millions of hours of labour. The minority of workmen who were keeping away through drink were hindering the sober majority. It was hindering the Navy, it was causing the admirals terrible anxiety by delaying ships, placing transports at the mercy of submarines; repairs could not be done in time, and docks were congested. Our ships were being destroyed and our food was difficult to supply, yet the trade in alcoholic liquor during the war has used up three million tons of food—enough to last the nation for over three hundred days, and it has used up more sugar than the Army has used.

The awful story of the sufferings of our men in Mesopotamia can never be forgotten. Sir Victor Horsley, the great surgeon, went out there and gave his life for the country. The men were suffering from cholera, diarrhœa, and dysentery. He found a shortage of drinking water, but there was whisky and champagne in the very few transports that arrived, and in that torrid climate the military authorities were issuing rum instead of food and sterile water. Quite lately members of the Murmansk force in Russia have complained of the great quantities of alcohol which were being sent out to them by every ship which arrived. Incidentally this complaint appears to be justified by an account in the 'Daily Mail' of September 5, 1919, of a ship which was bound for North Russia. This ship was carrying whisky, brandy, and port for the forces in Russia, and eighteen of the crew were charged at Liverpool with breaking into forty cases of spirits valued at £200, and being hopelessly drunk. The ship's boy was the only one sober. This gives one some hope for the rising generation!

We shall never know how many of our fine young boys have been lost in the air owing to the failure to limit in any way the alcohol which they were allowed to consume.

Surgeon Anderson, who has been examining airmen since the first year of the war, deprecated the taking of alcohol by pilots. He said: "The action of a little alcohol is intensified greatly by flying." He added: "And while I have known men to do some amazing 'stunts' under its influence, it always beats them in the end. A man of this kind retained on one of his worst days a power of reasoning which, in spite of sleepiness, made him decide not to attempt any 'stunts.' So he set off for home — thirty miles away. Over his aerodrome he performed almost unheard-of antics. Ultimately he 'crashed,' and when he recovered con-

sciousness he said that until the last moment he could remember he had stuck to his resolve not to do 'stunts'!"

The renowned Immelman, the great German aviator, in one of the last letters he wrote, said he had given up all alcohol, as he found the smallest quantity had a bad effect.

When the terrible harm the liquor trade was causing was realised, a great many of the most influential and patriotic people in the Army, Navy, and civil life urged total prohibition for the duration of the war; and the King himself and Lord Kitchener, the Minister for War, resolved to give up all alcoholic drinks, hoping no doubt that the nation would follow their example. We were constantly told that the working classes would not endure any restrictions of their drinking habits, but this is merely the liquor trade propaganda. Mr Arthur Henderson, one of the Labour leaders, has declared that those who said so ought to have the courage to test the opinion of the working classes on democratic lines. He believes that if the proposal had been made in the first three months of the war to have war-time Prohibition it would have been almost unanimously accepted. However, total Prohibition by legislation was believed to be too extreme a measure; therefore, in order to obtain temporary command of the trade in alcoholic liquors, a Liquor Control Board was established: owing to the free hand which was granted to that Board the consumption in liquor was brought to a more reasonable limit, and we were saved from the disasters which threatened us. By the action of the Board, and the restrictions they were able to impose, convictions for drunkenness fell 80 per cent, with a corresponding improvement in public health and decrease of crime, and a vast amount of unfitness, inefficiency, and ill-health was saved the nation. But that Board, which was only for the duration of the war, has ceased to exist, and a very strong propaganda, financed no doubt by the liquor trade, is taking place, to urge that things shall be restored to their former condition. We must hope that some way out may be found to preserve us from such a calamity. But there must be no going to sleep, no procrastination, or we shall find the forces opposed to us in possession of the field.

The second choice which the electors will have is the closing of one quarter of the public-houses in the area in which they vote. We may dismiss this as an almost useless reform, as, for instance, in a place with twenty public-houses, if five were closed it would only throw the trade into the hands of the other fifteen houses.

The third choice is for Prohibition, and a small but enthusiastic number of prohibitionists are working to persuade the people of Scotland to vote for prohibition of all alcoholic drink when the Bill comes into force next year.

If the Prohibition resolution

should not be carried, the votes in favour of that resolution will be added to those recorded in favour of the closing of one-fourth of the public-houses.

We must now consider what Prohibition means. Prohibition, if it means anything, means the forbidding of the manufacture and sale of all alcoholic drink; it means that every castle, every mansion, and every house in the kingdom must give up its wine, its beer, and its whisky, and all alcoholic drink, for it would be unthinkable that the law should apply to the poorer portion of the nation and not to the richer. Those who favour Prohibition say truly that the immense waste of money on alcohol would be stopped, and good effect all round would be produced. The money that is not devoted to beer, whisky, and wine would be spent on bread, meat, and clothes, and on travel and education.

Few people realise the immense sums that are swallowed up by this pleasure. Since the war began the country has spent more than £720,000,000 on intoxicating liquor.

Americans are, as we see, coming rapidly to the idea that this colossal waste shall not continue in their country: it is America's great business men, for the sake of their industries, who are pressing on this change as much as the teetotalers. They have in some of their States, which have "gone dry" as they term it, a great object-lesson. The State of Kansas, for instance, has 103 counties. In 84 of these counties there are no paupers, in 35 there are no prisoners, and in 87 there are no lunatics. Her banks and barns are full to overflowing. Some of the counties have had no criminal prosecutions for ten years, and the death-rate is the lowest of any nation on the earth.

When it became apparent that 45 out of the 48 States intended to pronounce in favour of Prohibition, the party calling themselves "The Wets" still believed that the President would intervene to avert such legislation if only because 1920 is the election year for the President, and no Democratic President would like to risk the defection of the Irish and the German votes. It was, however, not in the President's power to do this.

In August 1917 the United States Senate gave a two-thirds majority to an amendment adding Prohibition to the Federal Constitution; four months later the House of Representatives followed. The amendment submitted to the State Legislatures was ratified by 15 of the States in 1918 and by 30 more this year—that is to say, 45 States out of the total 48 have voted for National Bone-dry Prohibition, and the law is due to come into effect on January 16th, 1920, one year after the vote of the thirty-sixth State, which gave the three-fourths majority of the legislatures to the constitutional amendment.

That they have put this law into action six months earlier, as we now know they have

done, is probably explained by the food crisis of last year. Largely to help Europe, the United States was stirred up to a most enthusiastic pitch in the saving of food and for stimulating production and preserving supplies. This threatened shortage of food furnished the Prohibitionists with a splendid opportunity. They added a rider to the Food Bill forbidding the use of all foodstuffs in the manufacture of liquor, and stopping the sale absolutely as from July 1, 1919. Ten days after the Armistice the Act was signed by Mr Wilson.

The opposers of Prohibition count on the workmen rebelling against this law. It is said that the American Federation of Labour, at its annual convention in June, condemned national prohibition by a large majority, and its opponents are hoping that it may turn out to be a colossal impossibility. Whether they are justified in so thinking it is impossible yet to know. The Dominion of Canada, as we know, has been dry for the duration of the war, and is now dry, and we hear no complaints from that country. Workmen writing to their relations in Scotland state the fact, but without complaint. Yet there appear to be disadvantages. A grain merchant, who has just returned from a wide tour in Alberta, writes: "Very few people here complain of the lack of liquor. The only bad feature I see, so far, is that al the country hotels, or most of them, have gone out of business as far as furnishing meals is concerned, as they say they were a losing concern. The result has been that in nearly all the small towns you can only get meals at Chinese restaurants."

The Protestant Churches in the United States are strongly for Prohibition, and also a large body of the Catholic clergy. The great industrial and commercial corporations are passionately determined that America shall take the wonderful opportunity which now presents itself to lead the commercial world, and they believe, in order to do this, that they must have thorough efficiency; and that thorough efficiency depends upon prohibition of liquor. The glorious American climate is their ally. Also the argument of material wellbeing makes a tremendous appeal to the people, who believe that they lead the world in the matter of wellbeing and comfort.

We now hear in the month of September that Prohibition is in full working order in the United States, and so far there has been no successful opposition. Those who can afford it have laid in immense stocks of liquor, which will last a little time, but not for so very long. There has not been a penny of compensation paid, nor any idea of such a thing. The brewers and distillers have tried to recoup themselves by selling their remaining stock at enormous prices. It is said the shareholders kicked a little, but they were simply told "it is the law," and ap-

parently nothing more could be said.

It is stated that if alcohol were used for trade purposes, instead of for ruining the stomachs and brains of the men of the country, it would give power and great prosperity. Its advocates in the use of industrial life say that life would no longer be a life of trial and misery; it would shorten the hours of labour and make life easier. It would drive our engines and our motor-cars, it would light our homes and towns and cities as it does the Philippine Islands. It would build up the nation instead of pulling it down. "Alcohol is much too good to drink," a famous cricketer and naval officer wrote, "and only a semi-imbecile nation would make a national drink of it." We ought to take this traffic in alcohol, which is now the road to ruin, and harness it to industry to be the road to happiness.

There was no doubt that there was a good deal of feeling in America that we were wasting grain in the manufacture of beer, while they in America were doing their very utmost to save every particle of wheat to supply our needs, and there was some very plain speaking. We must remember that a gallon of beer uses 2½ lb. of grain, and a gallon of whisky 17½ lb.

The American, Dr Fort Newton, preaching in the City Temple, asked: "How long will America send foodstuffs to England only to have them used to make liquor to ruin our boys? It is not fair; it is not cricket." He said: "When I see American boys staggering in the streets drunk, I hate London. In America, even in those places where liquor is sold, it is a criminal offence to sell it to any one wearing the uniform of the Army or Navy. But in London it is not so. Here, every opportunity is offered, every trap set to debauch our boys on their way to and from the front."

It hurts us women very deeply that any responsible person should be able to speak of our country in this manner, and now that we have the vote a tremendous responsibility rests upon us. We now have the power to insist upon some drastic change being made.

France has given a wonderful example in the war. On the walls of every post-office in France during the war, the Government ordered to be exhibited a declaration, signed by the President, calling on those who loved France to honour the memory of their dead by fighting alcohol. This declaration said: "Drink is as much your enemy as Germany"; and another statement is: "Drink decreases by two-thirds our national production; it raises the cost of living, and increases poverty."

It is said that the fight against alcohol in France saved the babies in Paris from death. While the babies of Edinburgh were dying as never before, Paris won for herself the enduring distinc-

tion, in the first year of the war, of the lowest infant death-rate ever recorded in her history, and she did it by giving her babies the milk that drink steals from our babies at home, and by prohibiting the sale of absinth and alcohol to the mothers.

No one has spoken more strongly on this subject than Mr Lloyd George, who stated in the early years of the war that drink was a greater menace to this nation than all the German submarines. This was pretty strong, because the German Government believed that they were going to starve out this country by the work of the submarines, and it did not seem at all impossible that they might succeed. Mr Lloyd George also said: "What we could afford before the war we certainly cannot afford after the war, and one of the things we cannot afford is a drink bill of £160,000,000 a year." What would the Prime Minister's feelings have been could he have known that the drink bill for the year in which he was speaking had leaped up to £259,000,000?—and this great sum for little more than half the quantity of beer, wine, and spirits!

In the town of Dundee, so late as June 1919, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children dealt with 48 cases, involving the welfare of 123 children; 17 of the fathers and 15 of the mothers were drinking.

This is another responsibility which is imposed on the women of Scotland—to see that drinking among women shall be diminished, and as much as possible stamped out.

The vast amount of knowledge on this question, which has been almost forced upon the country during the last five years, must be utilised. We have witnessed the great dangers which attend the consumption of alcohol and its free sale in the country, and this knowledge strengthens the hands of the Prohibitionists, who believe that only by abstention from drink can the people be made efficient, and they welcome the Bill which proposes to enforce prohibition if a sufficient number of people can be persuaded to vote for it. We greatly fear that the prohibitionist may serve, as he has served before, to confound the country with his cry for teetotalism and refusing to allow any other rational reform of the liquor traffic. If the great majority of the electors refuse this teetotalism and the prohibitionist opposes all other solutions of the question, he goes hand in hand with the liquor trade to force on the nation the sale of alcohol in its most destructive form; he is really an ally of the trade. Vast numbers of people have seen with dismay how astoundingly mismanaged the liquor traffic has been in the past, and how terrible the social results have been. Not once, but several times, reforms might have been secured had not the teetotalers rushed in to oppose them. The average man believes that alcohol in strict

moderation does him no particular harm. A glass of good wine is a pleasure to many persons, and a glass of beer no doubt makes palatable the badly-cooked food which many of our working men are obliged to accept owing to the poor provision for cooking which their wives have to contend with in their homes. Probably for these and other reasons they will refuse to agree to total prohibition of alcoholic liquors. Therefore it comes to this, Are we really to be thrown back into the condition in which we were before the war when the sale of drink is pushed to its greatest limit in order that the pockets of private persons may be filled?

We impute no depravity either to the brewers and distillers or their clients. It is a simple fact that the financial interests of this trade are founded on the greatest consumption of drink for private profit, and this cannot be anything but a fearful clog on any social progress.

As we have said before, these last five years have brought more understanding of this important question than the two hundred years preceding them, and the course recommended by many of those who have taken the most prominent part in the direction of this vital interest is not that of any one of the choices put before the Scotch electors in the Bill which comes into operation next year.

The appointment of the Liquor Control Board practically saved the country from disaster. The Board proved first of all that men could be made sober by legislation. They practically took possession of a large area about Carlisle, bought up the breweries, did away with the gigantic waste that was going on, gave good liquor and good food, did not press the sale, and effected a revolution in the whole thing. In many cases the former licencees were kept on as managers, and in the early days it was difficult for them to believe that they were not to press the liquor. One man, who was again serving a customer who had already consumed a fair quantity of liquor, was stopped by the General Manager, who happened to be in the house. The manager protested "that the man could carry more liquor without getting into trouble with the police." The General Manager explained that from the point of view of the Board this idea was totally wrong. At the end of a long argument the ex-licencee exclaimed: "Of course, I can easily work that way, if the Board want it, if you tell me that I am not to be dismissed for letting down the trade."

We have here the whole thing in a nutshell—sobriety, not turnover, was the first concern of the Board, and the managers had to learn that. It was clear enough what the former system had been—namely, turnover, not sobriety. In other parts of the country, where the Liquor Control Board did not take full possession, things were not so

well. Bad liquor was given at immense prices, and the consumer was exploited in every way.

Is it not possible that the Labour unrest was due more to this grotesque profiteering, both by the Government and private owners, than to the absence of beer and whisky? "Had the Government stopped the traffic at the commencement of the war," said a Trades Union leader, "there would have been no word about it, and we should have gained so much; but, instead of doing it, they allowed the liquor man to lash the people into fury by scandalous profiteering."

A public-house broker a short time ago stated that his occupation was gone, because no public-house ever came into the market now: they are looked upon as gold-mines.

Financially the brewers and distillers have not suffered in the least. On the contrary, they have prospered enormously. No one denies this: certainly not the brewers and distillers themselves. They are proud of their immense contribution to the revenue, and have expressed a lively sympathy for the consumer, from whom the whole of their contribution was levied.

We need go no farther than the Stock Exchange for evidence of what has happened. Brewery shares are now quoted at from twenty to forty times their pre-war value. These profits have not fallen from heaven. They came from the consumers' pockets. They came mainly from the working-man's pocket. Under pressure from the "Trade," therefore, the Government was only permitted to meet the urgent national necessity by sacrificing the consumer, and the poorest class of consumer at that.

Ample funds, a splendid organisation, effective control of most of the channels of publicity, and an absolutely single-minded attention to its own interests, make the strength of the liquor trade. No other commercial interest in the country compares with it for strength and influence.

They do not fear any disturbance; they believe their influence is too great. Supporters of the trade say, "It will not be necessary for the liquor trade to make any special arrangements to meet the coming assault. Fights in the past have produced machinery sufficient for any fresh emergency; it only remains for it to be set in motion at the proper time."

Unfortunately this is only too true. In the fights in the past the influence of the trade has been so enormous that it has practically controlled the nation. But this control should and must cease. Mr Bonar Law stated, in 1915, that the only real chance of temperance reform in this country is some system of disinterested management.

A practical people like the Scotch surely will not any longer endure such a state of things as existed in the past, and now that they have the opportunity of declaring their wishes, they must take ad-

vantage of it. But the Bill which will give them this opportunity is by no means complete. The flood of light which has been poured upon the question since the Bill was drawn up eight years ago makes it imperative that the Scotch people should demand that another choice should be added to the three which are given in the Bill.

Three important Committees —one for England, one for Scotland, and one for Ireland —composed of the most responsible and competent men in each country who could be chosen, have been sitting to report on a new course, which the experience derived from the record of the Liquor Control Board has shown to be perhaps the best that can be at present devised.

This system is that of State Purchase, or the acquisition and control by the nation itself of the whole trade in alcoholic liquors. In a recent debate in the House of Commons, Mr J. Jones declared that, under the present system, the Government and the trade combined to exploit the public. "We want," he said, "a substitute." "We have found you both out." "We want real public control of the liquor traffic." "The public should own the trade."

If the Liquor Trade were controlled and in the hands of the State (that means its control is in the hands of the people themselves), they could after that, with the most perfect ease, bring about any alteration they desired.

Of course there is always the argument against State Purchase — that the country should have nothing to do with the carrying on of such a destructive trade; but this is hypocritical in the last degree. An immense revenue for the country is derived from the trade, which the Government allows to be carried on in the most destructive manner possible. Under State management the trade would be conducted on totally different lines—the elimination of all private profit, the suppression of all superfluous licences, the supply of food and non-alcoholic drinks, and many other changes of vital importance to the future prosperity of the nation.

There is no longer any room for argument on this question. The experience of the Liquor Control Board, with an absolutely free hand in the 500 square miles of the Carlisle district which they took over, is decisive and unanswerable. It was no experiment. The country was on the verge of disaster owing to the private system of liquor control which prevailed, and the Government was compelled to action. The Board, in the one district in which they bought up all the interests and exercised complete control, kept the prices at reasonable levels; they protected the consumer from scandalous exploitations; they provided food in clean and well-equipped houses. The improvement in the economic efficiency of the people, and the reduction in misery and

degradation due to excessive drinking, were incalculable.

We have here an extract from a Canadian paper, giving a report of the Greenock Branch of the International Police and Prison Warders' Union. Why is not such a report given a prominent place in our principal Scotch journals? This Union resolved—"That the condition of our work and duties during the war having been made so much easier by the restrictions put on the hours and on the sale of intoxicating liquor by the Liquor Control Board, and in view of the benefits to the community, and especially to children, as shown by the facts related in the annual report of the chief constable, and as disclosed to us in the discharge of our duties, we resolve respectfully to urge that the restrictions be continued until the electors of Scotland have had an opportunity of voting on the disposal of licences in 1920."

The Committees to which we have referred have all reported that State Purchase could be carried out in a manner financially sound, and in fact that the State would make an excellent bargain; but the immense saving which takes place in a nation when excessive drinking is brought to an end does in truth make the question of finance a secondary one. No doubt immense efforts will be made by those financially interested to exaggerate the liabilities which the State would incur, but we may rely on the practical sense of the Scotch women to remain unmoved by such fulminations.

The three Committees properly insist that the profits to be taken for capitalisation must be pre-war profits, and that the effect of war conditions, whether favourable or the reverse, must be excluded.

The significant feature of the three Reports is that they are practically unanimous. They were all independent of each other, therefore the measure of agreement is remarkable. It was the unanimous view of the Committees that State Purchase is not only practicable, but comparatively simple of achievement. The means of carrying it out in Scotland are thoroughly debated and explained in the report of the Scotch Committee, and there seems no reason why the Scotch nation should not adopt this system at once independently of England and Ireland.

Some people will fear the word "nationalisation," but we must all remember that a plan for national ownership of the drink trade is altogether unaffected by arguments for and against nationalisation of coal and other industries. It is a special and peculiar problem standing aloof and by itself. The chief cause of opposition to the nationalisation of coal and coal-getting is the fear that it will limit output and increase prices both of coal and of the essential industries—steel, iron, &c.—which live by coal. A high standard of coal production is a primary

national need. With drink the position is entirely reversed. The State does not require the maximum output and consumption of beer and spirits as it requires them in other industries. All are agreed that it is against the national interest to stimulate the consumption of alcoholic drinks; therefore, the main argument against nationalisation falls to the ground in the case of the liquor trade.

Yet this solution of the question, which seems to be the most promising of anything hitherto proposed, has no place in the Scotch Bill, which was drawn up eight years ago; and it is the duty of the Scotch people, and above all of the 800,000 Scotch women voters, to demand insistently that those who believe in this measure should have an opportunity of expressing their opinion by their vote. We are assured that there are great numbers of people who would give their first vote to Prohibition, but knowing that this is not the least likely to be carried, would give their second vote to State Purchase; there are also great numbers who would give their first vote to State Purchase and their second to Prohibition. It cannot be impossible to so alter the Bill that they shall have the power to do this. If we cannot do this, the Bill will be an illusory one, and it will be merely a deception of the Scotch people; for what can we think of a Bill which pretends to give power to the people to decide the future conduct of the trade in alcoholic liquors and rules out the one proposal which promises a real solution of the question?

Let the women in every constituency at once appeal to their representatives in Parliament to insist on a clause being added to the Bill which will give them the opportunity of expressing their opinion of the proposed new system of dealing with this vital question. To say that it is too late, and that the Bill cannot be altered, is ridiculous. During the last five years our statesmen have become accustomed to make the most momentous decisions at the shortest notice, and our cities would now be in ruins and our people enslaved at this moment if this had not been so. The women voters of Scotland have a right to demand that the Bill shall be made a real one. Every woman will know what the feeling of her husband, her sons, and her brothers is on the question of prohibition. If it could be carried, many may think it would be a more excellent way; but there seems to be an almost universal consensus of opinion in Scotland that it cannot be carried, and we must demand, therefore, a reasonable alternative.

There are features in this proposal of State Purchase entirely favourable to Scotland. The Scotch nation is not fettered by hampering liquor legislation as is the English. The estimated cost would be about one-sixth of the cost in England. Another argument should appeal to women—wo-

men upon whose shoulders the provision of food for their households falls,—the Scotch national drink may be said to be whisky, and that implies the destruction of eight times the quantity of grain that is needed for beer; serious also is the fact that the production of whisky has far exceeded the consumption — too great as that has been. Between the years 1900 and 1905 the excess of whisky stored in warehouse, which was not required, was no less than eighteen million four hundred and eighty thousand (18,480,000) gallons. This means that about six million bushels of grain were used up for whisky that was not wanted! No dreadful waste of this kind could take place if the nation had the control of this trade. Also another consideration must weigh greatly with us—Prohibition, without a penny of compensation as carried out in the United States, seems to us unjust, but there would be no injustice in this scheme of State Purchase and its consequent elimination of private profit.

The time is short—let us at once demand that an additional clause giving the option of State Purchase be inserted in the Bill. The people of Scotland are a practical people, not "semi-imbecile," and the only conclusion to which a reasonable being can come, with the experience in the Carlisle area before their eyes, is that this monstrous obstacle of private interest in the way of a vital national reform must be swept away.

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE MACMUNN, K.C.B., C.S.I., D.S.O.

THE fronts of the Armies slept on the banks of the Tigris, weary after the tramp from the old brown battle-fields of Kut. Away behind the rearward Divisions still tramped on into the night, and transport-carts jammed and packed and opened out again.

After a year and more in trenches, the Army was a marching army once more, cavalry and horse artillery on the flank, straggling transport in the rear, and galloping staffs all in due and ancient form. After a lifetime of trench and mud and flies, the open veldt is a joy untold. There was nothing to conceal from the Turk. The British Army was advancing in echeloned mass, and all Mesopotamia knew it; so the camp-fires might twinkle merrily, and the camp kettles sing, while commissariat officers handled the wherewithal from off river steamers, and sweated far into the night.

Up the north road from Kut, Ford van convoys and mule-carts and camels brought up supplies from the river dumps, dropped in succession at bends in the river. The Tigris winds like Meander gone mad, and as the sun went down in the west behind Babylon, the trails of smoke to the south showed the faithful fleet bringing the sinews of war to the Army. Steamers are better than railways when an army marches up a navigable river, for the metals and the permanent way are ready laid.

The way of the British on the Mesopotamian rivers is an old one. In 1836 Colonel Francis Rawdon Chesney of the Royal Artillery, *le père du canal*, and Captain Blosse Lynch of the Indian Navy, brought two steamers by bullock train from Alexandretta to Bir on the Euphrates in sections, and then and there erected them, sailing down the Euphrates to Basra, and up the Tigris to Bagdad, navigating the Karun also and the head of the Persian Gulf. Four years they spent at the job, good King William being their original sponsor, and for the rest of their lives plagued a British public, who neither knew nor cared enough to take advantage of their pioneer discoveries.

The great fleet that fed Maude and his army at Bagdad in the biggest river war the world has yet seen, is a triumph to the memories of Chesney and Lynch, akin by the thin connecting line of the Lynch Steamship Company with the founder's original efforts.

Perhaps the shade of Chesney, like Vanderdecken, drove his phantom *Tigris* among the

monitors ahead of Maude's magnificent paddle-ship, the *P.S. 53*, that followed close on the marching Divisions.

Perhaps Nearchus and the Emperor Julian, who had led huge flotillas on the same rivers, were permitted to see the long procession of paddlers and tunnel-tugs piled high with forage and grain and ammunition. Perhaps . . . but all Mesopotamia so teams with a crowded past that there is no rein to imagination that starts on a course so populated.

This spirit of the past has permeated the Army with varying degrees of inaccuracy during its long sojourns on the rivers. Ur of the Chaldees lies close to the troops at Nasiriyeh on the Euphrates. Bricks bearing the stamp of "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, Son of Nabopollassar," as county council bricks bear their stamp, are to be picked up on all sides.

Despite the long vista of centuries that have passed since Abraham and Terah went north from Ur of the Chaldees and the plains of Shinar, their counterparts of the Bedouin are to be seen on the banks of the river, sitting in their tents in the noonday sun, ready to separate as their flocks grow too large for the pasturing.

The railway cuttings drive through burial mounds and turn out slipper coffins and burial urns of the Parthians. Greek and Roman coins turn to the spade of the entrenching soldier. Close to Kut lies Tel Lo, one of the oldest sites in Chaldea, whence came the famous statue of Gudea the Patesi, as far back beyond the days of Nebuchadnezzar as the latter from our day. The canals of Babylon are the trenches of our advancing troops, and the Arch of Ctesiphon is an aiming point for the artillery.

The battlefields round Kut and Es Sinn being devoid of named points, though named points are necessary to military operations, therefore a name had to be found on the military maps for every hummock and dead canal that could be recognised. To give Scriptural names seemed to be an easy method, and Sodom, Gomorrah, and Lot's Mound have hopelessly confused the Board School geography of the soldiery, who but know that they are within the countries of Holy Writ.

Among officers some study of Chaldean history has become popular, and many look for the days when the mounds of Nineveh shall be reached and the interest of Babylon exploited. Assyria, Babylonia, and earlier Chaldea are full of fascination, and the peptonised volumes of Zenaide Ragozin are easily studied. The large Jewish population of the cities points possibly accurately enough to the side currents of the Captivity, and the aged Jews have a biblical appearance which appeals much to Old Testament conceptions.

The great flat-bottomed boats of the Euphrates, pitched inside and out with bitumen, are the dead spit in their lines

of the Ark of Regent Street toyshops, a quaint side glimpse on authenticity of tradition, while the boats that once were Noah's are built by sappers, to whom nothing is sacred, into bridges to take the "forty-pounder" train across the Tigris.

Lest anything should be wanting to connect ancient history with modern practice, we note how the water of the Kherka, which flows into the marshes east of the Tigris, famous to this day for its purity, was carried on mules for the use of Darius, in silver flagon "ready boiled for use" as the cuneiform has it.

While the Army lay on the Tigris listening happily to the chunk of the passing steamers up the bends behind that meant to them and their cannon the morrow's meal, the outpost line of the cavalry, lying in front of the echeloned Division, kept watch lest the Turk attempt some night attack.

Cavalry days are weary ones. Boot and saddle early when the water is too cold for horses to drink, long halts in the desert, while formations mass in rear or pack wireless sets are erected and dismantled, and patrols hunt mounted Arabs away into the mirage. Disappointing days, too, when the enemy would be out of reach or else lie installed in a network of dry canals, ready to bite if attacked, but to slip away in the night after the manner of rearguards. That day three squadrons had charged home in the wild disorder that canal grids can create, and though losing heavily had ridden back with the glory of action on their sword points, and the surge and thunder of the afternoon had died down to the peace of the tired bivouac.

The day was over, and it had but remained to "Battez le tambour à petits coups bas" and

> "Plantez un croix sur son tombeau,
> Gravez son nom son numéro,"

save that among desert Arabs the grave must be camouflaged lest it be desecrated.

The long horse lines stretch back to the waggons, and the crunch of corn tells of the satisfaction of rest. In the gun-parks of the horse artillery limber gunners give soothing dollops of petroleum jelly to tired gun-springs, and hot tea to tired muscles.

The front line lay along a dry inundation canal, and a line of sentries peered into the dark plain and listened to the plover's call and the jackal's hunting. In a hollow behind a portion of the canal two officers lay watching a tin of "M. & V." ration warm on a fire of crackling thorns. A cloak, a water-bottle, and a tin of "M. & V." are fairly good camp furniture on a fine night on outpost. A little farther down the canal two telephone orderlies attend to a buzzer and a similar fire. To their front the deep red glow over Babylon still lingered on the horizon.

Tom Fearon, the squadron commander, tapped a refill into his pipe, rolled over to ease his hip, and remarked to the divisional intelligence officer, who

was peering over the canal bank—

"Watchman, what of the night?"

"Plaguey dark and smells of cheese," said his companion, shutting up his night-glass. "I was trying to see the Arch of Ctesiphon against the skyline —saw it this afternoon from top of a mound."

"Were you up here with Townshend's advance?"

"No, worse luck. I was stuck at Kut with G.H.Q., and went down the river with them. Heard all about it from Jones of the 4th, who got down with us, wounded. The Arabs are always cutting away at the base to get it to fall down and bag the bricks. There is timber up high in it too—cedar of Lebanon I fancy, probably the oldest timber in the world."

"What's the date of the place?"

"Oh, about 500 A.D. Sassanian, you know. Quite modern for this country. I am *blasé* now and don't care much for anything A.D. In fact, anything before 2000 B.C. is rather trivial."

"You bloated archæologist. How long were you out here before the war?"

"A couple of years. A year at Babylon and a year poking about. I want really to join the French mission at Shush. Elam for my money."

"Can you read these old bricks?"

"Oh yes, to some extent, —the more recent cuneiform certainly."

"Have you been to Nineveh?"

"Yes, but you can't see anything. Layard and other explorers filled in their shafts, you know, to protect the interior. They are just mounds of dust, larger than some, larger than those we have passed to-day on the old Nahrwan Canal. But Assyrian carvings do interest me, and at one time I knew the collection in the British Museum and the Louvre pretty well. Their carvings are the histories of the Kings' reigns. It is ancient Chaldea that interests me though, and the old Chaldean race. Shumer and Akkad, and incidentally whether the ancient Chaldeans were Turks."

"How do you mean Turks?"

"Well, I really mean Turanians, whence the name Turak and Turaki, a Tartar or Mongolian people. You saw those prisoners we took to-day. Why, they are Tartar. They are like our Goorkhas, only fairer, but most especially like that Hazara company we saw at work this morning. It is thought that the ancient Elamites and earliest Chaldeans were of the same stock. If the story of Genesis, which is the story of Chaldea, is to be accepted, perhaps it is true that these people and all Mongolians are descended from Cain. Some say that the almond eye is the brand of Cain. Certain it is that all true Turanians are wanderers on the face of the earth, nomads all. Anyway, it is a fascinating speculation."

"I must try and have a dig at it. It is absurd to be in the midst of it and not under-

stand. Young Wheatly in my squadron had several books. He left me Assyria, when he was wounded. It has jolly interesting pictures of the old carving. Why, there are Assyrian soldiers cutting down palm-trees, amid irrigation ditches, just as we do. But what cruel brutes. Some of the carvings are full of tortures — people having their eyes poked out, and being skinned alive, and burned with red-hot irons."

"Yes, that is so. The Assyrians were the most ruthless of torturers. As for the palm-tree cutting, nothing is new in the world you know. Why, look at that *shaktur*[1] by the bank to-day. It is pitched inside and out with bitumen like the description of the Ark. I don't fancy those Bedouin tents of camel-hair are different from the tents of Abraham one jot. Do you remember how the stranger came to Abraham and told him how Sarah, stricken though she was in years, would bear a son, and how Sarah laughed behind the tent door at the jest. You may hear the laughter to-day behind the tent walls if you jest with the master of the tent."

"Ah, well—it's very fascinating. What's the difference between an Assyrian and a Hun? Jolly little, I fancy."

"Oh, the old Boche is just like any other slave folk. See those Egyptians down at the base, jolly cheery coves. Order them to flog their next-door comrade, they do it heartily. The Hun does what he is told. Slave folk are always cruel. The Turk is as bad."

"Let us turn in, anyway. It's a perfect night, and we start at five. Hope the old Turkey man lets us alone."

And the pair subsided into reverie till the pipes ceased to bubble and squeak, and the Army slept. But sleep is not always to the tired nor rest to the weary. Two hours later, when Rigel and Betelgeux stood high in the Chaldean heavens and the Army slept log-tired, and perhaps Maude alone kept vigil with the sentries, while his staff mapped out the latest news, or reported, as in the old tag, "All quiet on the Potomac," — a shot rang out on the front line. Two more followed as the cavalry outpost steadied itself, and Fearon and the Intelligencer rolled from their cloaks.

"D—n those silly swine! The bells of heaven won't ting-a-ling for them! Anything doing?"

A cry and an oath came down the breeze, and two figures came across to the officers' post. A duffedar of Indian cavalry, followed by a trooper, came up and reported a prisoner. Some one trying to creep through the line. They had caught him—shot him, apparently. Seemed to be a *badu* (an Arab).

"Better bring him along here," said the Intelligencer. "May get something out of

[1] A kind of native boat.

him. Don't let them hurt him."

The unfortunate wretch was brought over on a stretcher, and a flashlight turned on him. It was a queer bundle of rags, and the Intelligencer peered over it to find a clean-cut Arab face, with the knit brows of a man who has long stood the glare of the noonday sun.

"Why, it is Muhammad Hussein of the Beni Lam!"

The bundle moved, and tried to speak.

"This is one of the G.H.Q. agents. He used to be with me."

The stretcher was placed on the ground, and Fearon sent the men off save two, who stood apart leaning on their rifles.

Esto, the Intelligencer, talked to him in Arabic, and the Arab tried to raise himself.

"Call one of the men to support him."

A Sikh came and raised him slightly.

"Why, look at the man's knees!"

They were worn to the bone from crawling on them, torn and bleeding. The Arab commenced to pick at rags round his legs and to speak slowly. The medical officer of the regiment came up, thinking from the shots that some one might need him.

As the Arab picked at the rags the medical officer helped. The man's legs were a mass of raw, red sores.

"Bagdad boils?" asked Fearon.

The medical officer shook his head. "Burns, man—burns! Burnt with a red-hot iron."

The Arab broke in—

"The Turks caught me. They burnt me all over with a red-hot rifle-barrel, and told me to go back and tell my English friends. I have been crawling for ten days."

And Esto thought of the carvings from Nineveh up the river—of captives held steady with a ring through their lips and a tight cord, while an arrow-point was jabbed in their eyes, and the red-hot irons got ready in the braziers hard by.

For has not the Preacher said—

"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun"?

A COMPANY OF TANKS.

BY MAJOR W. H. L. WATSON, D.S.O., D.C.M.,
Author of 'Adventures of a Despatch Rider.'

CHAPTER X.—THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI—FLESQUIERES.

(November 4th to 20th, 1917.)

FROM La Lovie in the Salient I went on leave. I was recalled by wire on the 4th November to discover that, during my absence, the battalion had moved south to our old training-ground at Wailly. The apathy and bitter disappointment, caused by our misfortunes on the Poelcapelle Road, had disappeared completely, and the company, scenting a big mysterious battle, was as eager and energetic as if it had just disembarked in France.

For once the secret was well kept. The air was full of rumours, but my officers knew nothing. It was not until I saw the Colonel that I learnt of the proposed raid on Cambrai, and discovered to my great joy that we were to attack in company with the Fifty-first Division.

This Division of Highland Territorials had won for itself in the course of a year the most astounding reputation. Before Beaumont Hamel in November '16 it had been known as "Harper's Duds." Since that action it had carried out attack after attack with miraculous success, until at this time it was renowned throughout the British Armies in France as a grim and terrible Division, which never failed. The Germans feared it as they feared no other.

We trained with this splendid Division for ten days, working out the plans of our attack so closely that each platoon of Highlanders knew personally the crew of the tank which would lead it across No Man's Land. Tank officers and infantry officers attended each other's lectures and dined with each other. Our camp rang at night with strange Highland cries. As far as was humanly possible within the limits of time, we discussed and solved each other's difficulties, until it appeared that at least on one occasion a tank and infantry attack would in reality be "a combined operation."

The maps and plans which we used in these pleasant rehearsals were without names, but although this mystery added a fillip of romance to our strenuous preparations, we were met by a curious difficulty—we did not dare to describe too vividly the scene of the coming battle for fear the area should be recognised. There was a necessary vagueness in our exhortations. . . .

One fine day Cooper, Jumbo, and I motored over to this nameless country. We passed through the ruins of Bapaume and came to the pleasant

village of Metz-en-Couture on the edge of the great Havrincourt Wood. Leaving our car, we walked over the clean grassy hills to the brand-new trench system, then lightly held by the Ulster Division.

It was a country of bare downs, occasional woods, sunken roads, plentiful villages, surprising chalk ravines, and odd disconnected mounds, and the key to it was Bourlon Wood.

You will remember that on the east of the Bullecourt front was the Quéant Salient. The German defences then ran suddenly to the south in order to obtain the protection of the enormous, unfinished Canal du Nord. By Havrincourt village, which was set on the side of a hill, the Canal met Havrincourt Wood, and the enemy line turned again to the east, skirting the fringes of the wood and continuing cleverly at the foot of a range of low chalk hills. A rough diagram may make this clear, and will enable you to connect this battle with the lesser battles of Bullecourt.

The front which concerned my brigade extended from Havrincourt to east of Flesquieres. Havrincourt itself was defended on the west by the Canal, and on the south by a ravine and the outlying portions of the great wood. In front of the German trenches the trees had been cut down, so that the approach was difficult and open. East of Havrincourt the German trenches were completely hidden from view by the lie of the ground. This method of siting trenches was much favoured by the Germans at the time. Clearly it prevented direct observation of fire.

Further, it compelled tanks to start on their journey across No Man's Land, unable to see the trenches which they were about to attack.

The trenches on the slope immediately behind the enemy first line were in full view, and the roads, buildings, patches of chalk, distinctively-shaped copses, would provide useful landmarks, if they were not hidden by the smoke of battle.

Apart from its natural defences the Hindenburg System was enormously strong. In front of it there were acres of low wire. The trenches were wide enough to be serious obstacles to tanks. Machine-gun posts, huge dug-outs, long galleries, deep communication trenches, gun-pits — the whole formed one gigantic fortification more than five miles in depth.

Yet we came back from our reconnaissance in the firm belief that tanks could break through this fortification without any difficulty at all. The ground was hard chalk, and no amount of rain could make it unfit for our use. Natural and artificial obstacles could be surmounted easily enough or avoided. Given sufficient tanks and the advantage of surprise, there was no earthly reason why we should not go straight through to Cambrai. What could stop us? The wire? It did not affect us the slightest. The trenches? They were a little wide, but we knew how to cross them. Guns? There were not many, and few would survive the duel with our own artillery. Machine-guns or armour-piercing bullets? The Mk. iv. tank was practically invulnerable. If the infantry were able to follow the tanks, the tanks would see them through the trench systems. In open country it would be for common-sense and the cavalry, until the enemy filled the gap with his reserves.

Jumbo expressed our feelings admirably—

"Unless the Boche catches on before the show, it's a gift!"

We returned to Wailly bubbling over with enthusiasm. The last rehearsals were completed, and our future comrades, the 6th Black Watch and the 8th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, appeared implicitly to trust us. We tuned our engines and practised with the wily "fascine."

Fascine is the military term for "faggot." Each of our fascines weighed over one ton. By an ingenious mechanism they could be hoisted on to the roof of the tank. When a dangerously wide trench was reached, the driver pulled a rope, the fascine gently rolled off the tank into the trench, and the tank crossed at its ease. It was a simple device that produced an astonishing amount of bad language. Entraining was hideously complicated. Dropping the fascine on to the truck in front of the tank requires care and precision, while obviously if a fascine refuses to be picked up again, tanks are prevented from coming off the train....

At dawn on the 13th we arose and trekked a matter of five miles to Beaumetz Station, where we entrained successfully for an unknown

destination, although it took a little time to arrange the fascines on the trucks so that they would not fall off in the tunnels.

I watched the trains pull out from the ramps. The lorries had already started for our next halting-place. We were clear of Wailly. I motored down to the neighbourhood of Albert, and at dusk my car was feeling its way through a bank of fog along the road from Bray to the great railhead at Le Plateau.

It was a vast confusing place, and even a major in the Tank Corps felt insignificant among the multitudinous rails, the slow dark trains, the sudden lights. Tanks, which had just detrained, came rumbling round the corners of odd huts. Lorries bumped through the mist with food and kit. Quiet railwaymen, mostly American, went steadily about their business.

I found a hut with a fire in it and an American, who gave me hot coffee and some wonderful sandwiches, made of sausage and lettuce, and there I sat, until, just after midnight, word came that our train was expected. We walked to the ramp, and at last after an interminable wait our train glided in out of the darkness. There was a slight miscalculation, and the train hit the ramp with a bump, carrying away the lower timbers, so that it could not bear the weight of tanks.

Wearily we tramped a mile or so to another ramp. This time the train behaved with more discretion. The tanks were driven off into a wood, where they were carefully camouflaged; the cooks set to work and produced steaming tea; officers and men were made comfortable. Then we set off in our car again. The mist still hung heavily over the Somme battlefield and we continually lost our way. It was dawn before a desperately tired company headquarters fell asleep in some large and chilly huts near Meaulte.

That day (the 14th) and the next the men worked at their tanks, adjusting the fascines and loading up with ammunition, water, and rations. On the 14th we made another careful survey of our trenches and, through our glasses, of the country behind the German line. On the night of the 15th I walked along the tank route from our next detraining station at Ytres to our final lying-up position in Havrincourt Wood, a matter of seven miles, until I personally knew every inch of the way beyond any shadow of doubt.

At dusk on the 16th I was waiting on the ramp at Ytres for my tanks to arrive when I heard that there had been an accident to a tank train at a level-crossing a mile down the line. I hurried there. The train had collided with a lorry and pushed it a few hundred yards, when the last truck had been derailed and the tank on it had crushed the lorry against the slight em-

bankment. Under the tank were two men. I was convinced that I had lost two of my men, until I discovered that the tanks belonged to Morris and the two unfortunate men had been on the lorry. The line was soon cleared. The derailed truck was uncoupled, and the tank, none the worse for its adventure, climbed up the embankment and joined its fellows at the ramp.

My tanks detrained at midnight without incident, and we were clear of the railhead in an hour. It was a strange, fatiguing tramp in the utter blackness of the night—past a brick-yard, which later we were to know too well, through the reverberating streets of Neuville Bourjonval, and over the chill lonely downs to the outskirts of Metz, where no lights were allowed. We felt our way along a track past gun-pits and lorries and waggons until we came to the outskirts of the great wood. There we fell in with Morris's tanks, which had come by another route. At last we arrived at our allotted quarter of the wood, three thousand yards from the nearest German. The tanks pushed boldly among the trees, and for the next two hours there was an ordered pandemonium. Each tank had to move an inch at a time for fear it should bring down a valuable tree or run over its commander, who probably had fallen backwards into the undergrowth. One tank would meet another in the darkness and, in swinging to avoid the other, would probably collide with a third. But by dawn—I do not know how it was done—every tank was safely in the wood; the men had fallen asleep anywhere, and the cooks with sly weary jests were trying to make a fire which would not smoke. Three thousand yards is a little near . . .

For the next five days we had only one thought—would the Boche "catch on"? The Ulster Division was still in the line, and, even if the enemy raided and took prisoners, the Ulstermen knew little. By day the occasional German aeroplane could see little, for there was little to see. Tanks, infantry, and guns were hidden in the woods. New gun-pits were camouflaged. There was no movement on the roads or in the villages. Our guns fired a few rounds every day and night, and the enemy replied. There was nothing unusual.

But at night the roads were blocked with transport. Guns and more guns arrived, from field-guns to enormous howitzers, that had rumbled down all the way from the Salient. Streams of lorries were bringing up ammunition, petrol, rations, and whole brigades of infantry, marching across the open country, had disappeared by dawn into the woods. Would the Boche "catch on"? . . .

There was but little reconnaissance for my men to carry out, since the route to No Man's Land from the wood was short and simple. And

to see the country behind the enemy trenches it was necessary only to walk a mile to the reserve trench beyond the crest of the hill, where an excellent view could be obtained from an observation post.

By this time we knew the plan of the battle. At "zero" on the given day we would attack on a front of approximately ten thousand yards, with the object of breaking through the Hindenburg System into the open country. It was essential to seize on the first day the bridges over the Canal de l'Escaut and Bourlon Wood. We gathered that, if we were successful, we should endeavour to capture Cambrai and to widen the gap by rolling up the German line to the west.

On the front of our battalion, a little to the east of Havrincourt itself and opposite Flesquieres, Morris's company and mine were detailed to assist the infantry in capturing the first system of trenches. Ward's company was reserved for the second system and for Flesquieres itself. The surviving tanks of all three companies would collect in Flesquieres for a possible farther advance to the neighbourhood of Cantaing.

On the left was "G" battalion, with Havrincourt village as its first main objective, and on our right was "E" battalion, beyond which were the 2nd and 3rd Brigades of the Tank Corps. There was one tank to every thirty yards of front!

Until the 17th the enemy apparently suspected nothing at all; but on the night of the 17th-18th he raided and captured some prisoners, who fortunately knew little. He gathered from them that we were ourselves preparing a raid, and he brought into the line additional companies of machine-gunners and a few extra field-guns.

The 19th came with its almost unbearable suspense. We did not know what the Germans had discovered from their prisoners. We could not believe that the attack could be really a surprise. Perhaps the enemy, unknown to us, had concentrated sufficient guns to blow us to pieces. We looked up for the German aeroplanes, which surely would fly low over the wood and discover its contents. Incredibly, nothing happened. The morning passed and the afternoon —a day was never so long— and at last it was dusk.

At 8.45 P.M. my tanks began to move cautiously out of the wood and formed into column. At 9.30 P.M., with engines barely turning over, they glided imperceptibly and almost without noise towards the trenches. Standing in front of my own tanks, I could not hear them at two hundred yards.

By midnight we had reached our rendezvous behind the reserve trenches and below the crest of the slope. There we waited for an hour. The Colonel arrived, and took me with him to pay a final visit to the headquarters of the

battalions with which we were operating. The trenches were packed with Highlanders, and it was with difficulty that we made our way through them.

Cooper led the tanks for the last half of the journey. They stopped at the support trenches, for they were a little early, and the men were given hot breakfast. The enemy began a little shelling on the left, but no damage was done.

At 6.10 A.M. the tanks were in their allotted positions, clearly marked out by tapes which Jumbo had laid earlier in the night. . . .

I was standing on the parados of a trench. The movement at my feet had ceased. The Highlanders were ready with fixed bayonets. Not a gun was firing, but there was a curious murmur in the air. To right of me and to left of me in the dim light were tanks —tanks lined up in front of the wire, tanks swinging into position, and one or two belated tanks climbing over the trenches.

I hurried back to the Colonel of the 6th Black Watch, and I was with him in his dug-out at 6.20 A.M. when the guns began. I climbed on to the parapet and looked.

In front of the wire tanks in a ragged line were surging inexorably over the short down grass. Above and around them hung the blue-grey smoke of their exhausts. Each tank was followed by a bunch of Highlanders, some running forward from cover to cover, but most of them tramping steadily behind their tanks. They disappeared into the valley. To the right the tanks were moving over the crest of the shoulder of the hill. To the left there were no tanks in sight. They were already in among the enemy.

Beyond the enemy trenches the slopes, from which the German gunners might have observed the advancing tanks, were already enveloped in thick white smoke. The smoke-shells burst with a sheet of vivid red flame, pouring out blinding, suffocating clouds. It was as if flaring bonfires were burning behind a bank of white fog. Over all, innumerable aeroplanes were flying steadily to and fro.

The enemy made little reply. A solitary field-gun was endeavouring pathetically to put down a barrage. A shell would burst every few minutes on the same bay of the same trench. There were no other enemy shells that we could see. A machine-gun or two were still trained on our trenches, and an occasional vicious burst would bring the venturesome spectator scrambling down into the trench.

Odd bunches of men were making their way across what had been No Man's Land. A few, ridiculously few, wounded were coming back. Germans in twos and threes, elderly men for the most part, were wandering confusedly towards us without escort, putting up their hands in tragic and amazed resignation, whenever they saw a Highlander.

The news was magnificent. Our confidence had been justi-

fied. Everywhere we had overrun the first system and were pressing on.

A column of tanks, equipped with a strange apparatus, passed across our front to clear a lane through the wire for the cavalry.

On our left another column of tanks had already disappeared into the valley on their way to Flesquieres. It was Ward's company, but Ward was not with them. A chance bullet had killed him instantly at the head of his tanks. When we heard of his death later, the joy of victory died away. . . .

At 8 A.M. Cooper, Jumbo, a couple of runners, and myself started after our tanks. We questioned a group of Germans, who confessed that, while they had expected a raid in a day or two, they had known nothing of the tanks. We jumped down into the famous Hindenburg Line. At first we were a little unhappy: a machine-gun from the right was enfilading the trench and the enemy gunners were still active. We pushed along to the left and, after a slight delay, came to a deep sunken road, which cut through the trench system at right angles.

We walked up the road, which in a few yards widened out. On either side were dug-outs, stores, and cook-houses. Cauldrons of coffee and soup were still on the fire. This regimental headquarters the enemy had defended desperately. The trench-boards were slippery with blood, and fifteen to twenty corpses, all Germans and all bayoneted, lay strewn about the road like drunken men.

A Highland sergeant who, with a handful of men, was now in charge of the place, came out to greet us, puffing at a long cigar. All his men were smoking cigars, and it was indeed difficult that morning to find a Highlander without a cigar. He invited us in to a large chamber cut out of the rock, from which a wide staircase descended into an enormous dug-out. The chamber was panelled deliciously with coloured woods and decorated with choice prints. Our host produced a bottle of good claret, and we drank to the health of the Fifty-first Division.

A few German prisoners, with a large, stiff sergeant-major at the head of them, were halted outside while their escort snatched a hurried breakfast. The sergeant-major was trying earnestly to make himself understood. He seemed to have something important to say. His escort became impatient and irritated, but, before proceeding to more summary punishment, the corporal in charge brought him to me.

The sergeant-major explained to me rapidly that the place would undoubtedly be shelled. He knew that his artillery had already registered upon it. He realised that as a prisoner he must do as he was bid, but he besought me to instruct his escort to breakfast a little farther on. His words were confirmed by a

large shell which exploded in the bank above our heads.

I handed over the problem to a Highland officer who had come in for shelter, and we, who had already dallied longer than we had intended, left the corpses, the wine, and the panelled chamber. . . .

In fifty yards or so the cutting came to an end, and we found ourselves in the open with a tank a hundred yards away. We walked to it and discovered my section-commander, Wyatt, with Morris, who had been hit in the shoulder. They told me that we were held up outside Flesquieres, which was cleverly defended by field-guns. Several tanks had already been knocked out and others had nearly finished their petrol. And there was an unpleasant rumour that Morris was killed.

We took to a narrow communication trench and pushed on up the hill towards the village, meeting the survivors of two crews of another battalion, whose tanks had been knocked out in endeavouring to enter Flesquieres from the east along the crest of the ridge. The trench was being shelled. From the sound of the guns it appeared that they were only a few hundred yards away. We walked steadily up the trench until we came to the railway embankment, five or six hundred yards from the outskirts of the village, and we could go no farther, for on the other side of the embankment were the enemy and some of my tanks.

Leaving Cooper to keep in touch with the situation, I hurried back three miles to the nearest battalion headquarters with my runner. The infantry Colonel would not believe my report. He was assured that everything was going well, and, according to programme, we must be well beyond Flesquieres. So I sent a couple of messages to my own Colonel, whose headquarters were at those of the infantry brigade with which we were operating. I pointed out to the infantry Colonel that, if we had taken Flesquieres, it was difficult to account for the machine-gun fire which apparently was coming from the neighbourhood of the village, and, half-convinced, he sent his Scout Officer with me to find out what was happening generally, and to endeavour in particular to approach Flesquieres from the west.

We set out at once, taking our direction by a little copse which lies on the hillside a mile or so to the west of Flesquieres itself.

We were tramping across the open down, happily exposed, when the Battalion Scout Officer was convinced by a long burst of machine-gun fire that at least the western end of the village was still held by the enemy. A spent bullet struck the heel of my boot. We hurried on with more haste than dignity, and looking towards the village, I thought I could catch the flash of the gun in the window of a large white house. A particularly unpleasant burst and the Scout Officer was

crawling on his hands and knees towards a convenient trench. At that moment I knew no one wiser than the Scout Officer, and I followed his example. For the next five minutes the man in the window of the large white house must have enjoyed himself thoroughly. The air sang with bullets. With tremendous care we continued to crawl, until after a lifetime of suspense we came to within fifty yards of the trench. I jumped up and dashed forward, the Scout Officer and our two runners following me, and in a moment we were lighting our pipes and feeling acutely that somebody had made a fool of us both. We parted stiffly. The Scout Officer trotted down the hill to solve the doubts of his battalion commander. I pushed on again towards Flesquieres, keeping to the trench until the curve of the hill interfered with the view of the machine-gunner in the large white house.

Since there was little hope that I should be allowed to approach too closely to the village, I walked to the battalion rallying-place under shelter of the railway embankment, a mile or so to the west of the section where I had been held up a few hours previously. I found a few tanks there and the survivors of some crews.

I gathered that all attacks on the village had been unsuccessful. A few field-guns, cleverly sited in ruins and behind hedges, had knocked out at least a dozen tanks. The infantry, bereft of tanks, had been unable to advance. It had been a stubborn and skilful defence.

Of my eleven tanks four had been knocked out. S., brooding over his misfortune on the Poelcapelle Road, had engaged in a duel with a field-gun; his tank had been hit fair and square by the surviving gunners and it was thought that he and his crew were either casualties or prisoners. The majority of the remaining three crews had succeeded in getting away. F. and one of his sergeants had shown the utmost gallantry in collecting the wounded under fire and rallying the men.

The other companies of my own battalion and that company of another battalion which had attacked Flesquieres from the east had met a similar fate. The village was surrounded with dereliot tanks, like a boar at bay with dead hounds. Morris himself, who had gone forward in one of his tanks, was missing, and it was said that he was killed.

Of my remaining seven tanks three had become ditched. Two of these unfortunates in their eagerness to kill had collided and slipped inextricably into a trench. The remainder had rallied, and were ready, if necessary, to go forward again, but they were alarmingly short of petrol, and the tank with the supply-sledge had broken down. It was impossible, too, at this stage, to secure the necessary co-operation with the infantry, and an attack made by tanks alone would obviously fail.

We were about to start down the hill when I received

a message to rally in the Grand Ravine, the title of the insignificant valley behind the front system of the German trenches. I had already sent some of my men to the Regimental Headquarters in the Sunken Road for food and shelter. I now ordered the remainder of my men to rally there after they had left their tanks under a skeleton guard in the Ravine itself.

An hour later we set out from the Sunken Road on our weary tramp back to the camp in Havrincourt Wood. It was late in the afternoon. We were inexpressibly tired, and of course it began to rain steadily. We plodded along, passing guns, limbers, infantry coming up to make good the victory. The five miles were like fifty, and a year at least went by before we staggered into camp, slipping feebly in the mud. . . .

The adjutant was much distressed, for he had had no news of the Colonel, who apparently had left the infantry brigade headquarters early in the day. A pile of messages were waiting for him, including, to my chagrin, those which I had sent him in such haste when I had discovered that the Highlanders were held up at the railway embankment. It was after nine, and I was wondering whether or not to inform the brigade, when the Colonel came in with Cooper.

The Colonel, who had gone forward early in the battle, had found Cooper in the communication trench by the embankment, where I had left him with Jumbo to keep in touch with the situation. In the afternoon they had collected a few tanks and sent them into Flesquieres. The tanks had paraded through the outskirts of the village, and not a shot was fired at them; but later, when the infantry attacked again, the enemy came up from their hiding-places and let fly with machine-guns. At dusk Flesquieres was still inviolate.

We cared little about anything, except sleep. The Colonel told us that we should not be required on the next day. So after a meal and a pipe we turned in for the night.

CHAPTER XI.—THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI—BOURLON WOOD.

(November 21st to 23rd, 1917.)

In the morning we were able to look soberly at the situation. We had entered Flesquieres at dawn: the gallant, stubborn major who had defended the village so skilfully was killed in the final assault. On the left we had swept forward to the outskirts of Bourlon Wood, but we had not been able to enter it, for the few infantry who had reached it were utterly exhausted and the cavalry never appeared to carry on the attack. "G" battalion had covered themselves with glory. On the right we were everywhere

through the Hindenburg System, although in places there had been bitter fighting. At Marcoing Hammond had made a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to force a crossing by driving a tank into the Canal when the enemy had blown up the bridge.[1] Of the cavalry a few Fort Garry Horse alone had been able to cross by the foot-bridges. We had not reached Cambrai—we had not even occupied Bourlon Wood—but it was reported that there were few troops in front of us and that these were retiring northwards. It was decided, in consequence, to exploit the initial success.

We did not know it at the time, but it was too late. If only the cavalry had pushed forward into Bourlon Wood on the first day, when, according to all reports, it was held only by a bunch of machine-gunners! But it is not for a company commander to criticise, and I do not presume to do so. I am expressing merely a pious aspiration.

We ourselves had lost Ward, Morris, and a third of our men and tanks. It was almost impossible to believe that we should never see again "Roc" Ward, the great athlete, the very embodiment of energy, the skilled leader of men, the best of good fellows—and never hear again his enormous voice rolling out full-blooded instructions. As for Morris, we hoped that he might have been captured, but we feared that he was dead.[2] In my company we had lost S., a stout tank commander, and several of my best drivers.

We were able, however, to form two strong companies, of which I commanded one and Cooper the other, and we set to work in the afternoon of the 21st to put our tanks again in order.

On the morning of the 22nd we received orders to collect every available tank and move to Graincourt-lez-Havrincourt, a large village two miles north of Flesquieres, with a view to attacking Bourlon Wood early on the 23rd.

We first concentrated our tanks in the Grand Ravine, and endeavoured to load up with sufficient stores for the coming battle; but supplies were hard to get, and finally we were told that a large dump would be established at the chapel on the Flesquieres road, half a mile out of Havrincourt. A little too credulous, I moved my tanks to the appointed place and waited for the dump to appear.

We had, however, entered the state of open warfare, and we soon began to realise its disadvantages. My messengers scoured the countryside without success, and at last, when it grew dusk, I despaired and sent on my tanks to Graincourt, intending to arrange

[1] It was incorrectly reported later that the tank had fallen through the bridge. I have obtained the facts from Major P. Hammond, D.S.O., M.C., who was in command of the tanks at the bridge.

[2] He was seriously wounded and captured.

that my share of the dump, wherever it might be, should follow them.

I was unable to accompany my tanks, for I had been bidden to attend a Brigade Conference at this most desolate shrine. I had an hour to spare, and I spent it pleasantly enough in a neighbouring most comfortable dug-out, where a machine-gunner entertained me to a magnificent meal of coffee, hot salmon cakes, and plentiful bread and butter.

When I returned to the shrine, I found the battalion and company commanders of the brigade waiting for the brigade staff. It was chilly with a fluster of rain, my throat was sore, and I longed to return to the warm dug-out, but I did not dare. We waited for an hour and a half until our tempers were frayed and we had finished our stock of good stories. At last an officer from the brigade happened to pass by, and, taking pity on us, he informed us that the conference was now in session at Havrincourt Chateau. He was sorry we had not been told of the change of place. We were all so tired and cold and hungry that for a moment nobody spoke. Finally the Colonel expressed our feelings, and we tramped into Havrincourt.

It was rather a one-sided conference. Generals and people of real importance dashed in and out of rooms. I learned by cross-examination that the dump was somewhere on the road between Havrincourt and Graincourt—he was sorry we had not been told—and the Colonel discovered that we should attack in the morning with the Fortieth Division.

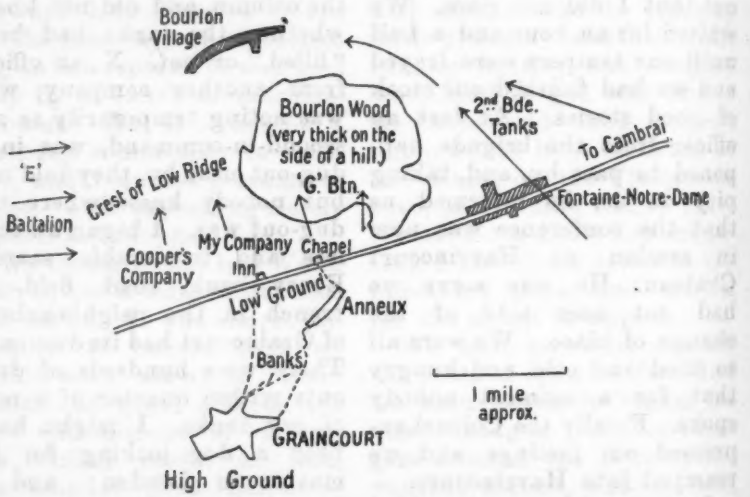
After this interesting discussion we went out into the night and trudged painfully through Flesquieres, where the battered houses looked a little self-conscious in the dim moonlight, to Graincourt itself. The battalion advance party had discovered excellent cellars, safe though damp. I left the Colonel and went in search of my tanks, hoping against hope that by some miracle they had run across the dump on the Havrincourt Road.

I found my tanks where they should be, but, to my utter dismay, the only officers with them had not come with the column, and did not know whether the tanks had been "filled" or not. X., an officer from another company, who was acting temporarily as my second-in-command, was in a dug-out near by, they told me, but nobody knew where the dug-out was. I began an endless and intolerable search. Every bank, road, field, or trench in the neighbourhood of Graincourt had its dug-outs. There were hundreds of dug-outs within quarter of a mile of my tanks. I might have been a dog looking for its master in London; and it was of the most urgent necessity that I should know for certain what my tanks had on board. I could not even find out for myself—the tanks, quite properly, were locked.

I had searched for three hours or more and the dawn

was near, when, returning in despair to battalion headquarters, I was greeted by a familiar voice. It was X.! Thinking that I would surely arrive by the Havrincourt Road he had taken possession of a dug-out on the side of that road, half a mile or more out of the village. My tanks had been lucky. On their way from the shrine they had by chance run right into the middle of the errant dump. Little damage had been done, and though the dump was not as large as it might have been, they had been able to take on board stores sufficient for one day's fighting.

I reported our success to the Colonel, who informed me that "zero" would be at 10.30 A.M. My composite company was detailed to co-operate with the infantry, who were attacking up the hill immediately to the west of the wood itself. Cooper's company was to be on my left. "E" battalion was to advance along the ridge from the west with the Ulster Division, and "G" battalion was to clear the wood. On the right, that is to the east of the wood, companies of the 2nd Tank Brigade were to assist the infantry to capture Fontaine-Notre-Dame, and to complete an encircling movement round the north-eastern outskirts of the wood. We should all meet, it was hoped, in Bourlon village. A rough diagram may make the plan clear.



Neither my tank commanders nor I had even seen Bourlon Wood, and we knew our front line only by the map. Further, we had not met the infantry with whom we were to co-operate. These, however, were trifling difficulties. Experts who had seen the wood told me it was plain enough to the eye. I hoped for the best, wrote a few orders, and snatched an hour's sleep. . .

Our tanks were parked in

the western outskirts of Graincourt. An hour after dawn they drew clear of the village, and it may be presumed that the enemy observed them, but he displayed no interest. At dawn he had shelled a little. When dawn had passed and we had made no attack, the shelling ceased. It did not occur to him that we might attack in the middle of the morning.

At 9 A.M. my tanks were just about to move off, when I received a disturbing message from the Colonel. "G" would not be able to arrive in time—their supplies had gone astray—one of my two sections was to tackle the wood itself. The situation was a trifle humorous, but I solemnly gave the necessary orders, instructing four of my tanks to assist the Fortieth Division in the capture of Bourlon Wood.

My tanks started for the battle, and after a little breakfast I walked to the high ground south-west of the village, and watched through my glasses the opening moves of the attack.

Across the foreground of the picture ran the great high-road from Bapaume to Cambrai. It was wide, perfectly straight, and fringed with orderly trees. Beyond it and to my left was a low hill, which the enemy still held. Our line ran diagonally up the slope of it, and away to the west we were on the ridge. Immediately in front of me on the hillside was the great dark mass of Bourlon Wood, square and impenetrable, covering the highest point of the hill and stretching over the skyline to the farther slope, which we could not see. The wood dominated the whole countryside, and beyond it there was nothing but low open country, extending to the marshes of the Scarpe. We could not live north of Havrincourt while the enemy held the wood, and if we captured the wood there was nothing to prevent us from sweeping northwards to the Scarpe or westwards into Cambrai. At the moment our line ran along the southern outskirts of the wood and to the south of Fontaine, which the enemy held in force.

At 10.30 A.M. the barrage fell and we could see it climb, like a living thing, through the wood and up the hillside, a rough line of smoke and flame. On the hillside to the left of the wood we could mark the course of the battle,—the tanks with tiny flashes darting from their flanks—clumps of infantry following in little rushes—an officer running in front of his men, until suddenly he crumpled up and fell, as though some unseen hammer had struck him on the head—the men wavering in the face of machine-gun fire and then spreading out to surround the gun—the wounded staggering painfully down the hill, and the stretcher-bearers moving backwards and forwards in the wake of the attack—the aeroplanes skimming low along the hillside, and side-slipping to rake the enemy trenches with their guns.

We watched one tank hesi-

tate before it crossed the skyline and our hearts went out to the driver. He decided, and the tank, brown against the sky, was instantly encircled by little puffs of white smoke, shells from the guns on the reverse slope. The man was brave, for he followed the course of a trench along the crest of the hill. My companion uttered a low exclamation of horror. Flames were coming from the rear of the tank, but its guns continued to fire and the tank continued to move. Suddenly the driver must have realised what was happening. The tank swung towards home. It was too late. Flames burst from the roof and the tank stopped, but the sponson-doors never opened and the crew never came out. . . . When I left my post half an hour later the tank was still burning. . . .

At noon I determined to push forward into the wood and discover what had happened to my tanks. We skirted the village, walked along a sunken road lined by dug-outs, and started to cross the low ground between us and the road. I at once began to wonder whether it was not perhaps a little early yet to go forward. The path to the highroad was the object of direct or indirect machine-gun fire, and an officer, who was sitting in a trench, told me cheerfully that Cooper and Smith, his second-in-command, had already been hit by chance bullets. We pushed on, however, to the inn on the highroad, and as the road was being shelled, we took to the ditch until a shell, bursting in the ditch itself, persuaded us to use the road. We did not get very far, and soon we returned to the top of the bank at the side of the sunken road. By this time "G" battalion were beginning to arrive and their tanks were moving across to Anneux Chapel.

After lunch I went forward again and reached a clearing on the south side of the wood, where the tanks had been ordered to rally. The enemy must have realised our intention, for the clearing was being shelled most systematically. The only tank in the clearing belonged to another battalion. The crew, realising their danger and a little lost, evacuated their tank and joined me in a small quarry where I had temporarily taken cover.

I left the quarry during a lull and walked up a sunken road into the wood, but I soon realised, first, that I should never find my tanks by tramping after them, and second, that I should be infinitely happier in my quarry. So I returned and spent the next hour in watching the rallying-place and in moving at intervals from one side of the quarry to the other.

About three I saw a couple of tanks cross the road at the inn, three-quarters of a mile away. So, as one shell had already burst on the lip of the quarry, I hastened to the cross-roads at Anneux Chapel on my way back to Graincourt,

and reached battalion headquarters at four.

Apparently we had captured the wood; but both Bourlon village and Fontaine-Notre-Dame were holding out. It was reported, too, that "E" battalion had suffered very heavily.

I walked along to my dug-out, where I discovered that the majority of my tanks had already returned in safety. They had realised the danger of the clearing and had come back direct to their starting-point, followed all the way by the German gunners.

Two of the tanks had successfully crossed the ridge and entered Bourlon village, but the infantry were prevented by the intense machine-gun fire from occupying the place. Two more of my tanks had experienced such concentrated machine-gun fire themselves that every man was wounded by flying splinters.

All the tanks had done their work well, having assisted the infantry to the limit of their advance. All of them reported that they had been given excellent targets, while our own casualties were astonishingly light. For us it was a most satisfactory day, spoilt only by the fact that Wyatt and Cooper had been wounded.

My last tank had just come in when the enemy, furious at the loss of the wood, began to shell Graincourt with "heavy stuff." The Colonel, realising what must happen, had already departed for the calm of Havrincourt Wood, while we were out of the danger area. To the accompaniment of distant crashes we sat down to our evening meal. . . .

(*To be continued.*)

THE GREAT SEARCH.

BY REAR-ADMIRAL BOYLE SOMERVILLE, C.M.G., R.N.

WHEN, in the early days of 1917, it was realised that the time had come for Count Bernstorff to retire from the scene of his highly unsuccessful labours, both diplomatic and undiplomatic, in the United States, a steamer had to be found sufficiently large to convey to Europe not only himself and his staff, but also about 120 German consuls, of varying degrees, from the different States and cities hitherto favoured with their society.

To these Herren (not to say "gentlemen") were attached a large collection of Frauen (not to say "ladies"), with children and nurses, their servants, their maids, and everything that was theirs. Besides these, a large number of neutrals, not necessarily connected with the Germans, decided to take advantage of the occasion; so that altogether there came to be about 800 persons to be accommodated for the journey to Europe. The fine Danish steamer *Fredrik VIII* was accordingly chartered for the trip.

It was arranged between the Governments concerned that if, on her passage to Europe, the vessel put in at Halifax, Nova Scotia, for search, she should be allowed free passage through the Allied blockade on reaching European waters, and that the "Right of Visit and Search" on the High Seas should be forgone, so that she could proceed direct to Copenhagen, her destination.

It was further arranged that sacks of diplomatic documents from Allied or Neutral Embassies could be carried, if they were registered and sealed at the British Embassy at Washington, and if the diplomatic messengers in charge of them received on their passports a special "visa" from our Ambassador. With the exception of these diplomatic "sacks," it was announced that every part of the great ship, every piece of luggage, every article of cargo, and every single person conveyed in her, including the crew, was liable to search.

All, all—except Count Bernstorff himself, that Sacred Ambassador; and he would be immune only if he would give (as he did give) a signed undertaking that he was not carrying on his Sacred Person documents, or indeed anything, either within or without It, except the clothes that covered It.

The harbour of Halifax is, in shape, long and narrow, and fairly straight. On approaching from seaward you pass up between gradually narrowing shores, fairly high on both hands, and reach the harbour proper, after making a bend round the tail of a small islet that divides the inner from the outer part. Here, within, are

the town wharves, the naval dockyard, the man-of-war anchorage, and the dry dock.

Steaming straight on past them, you come to a Narrows, a couple of hundred yards wide; and on passing through it, you find you are entering on a magnificent sheet of land-locked water, deep and still, bordered with forest, and with only a few signs of human possession—Bedford Basin.

This basin was arranged to be the searching place for the *Fredrik VIII:* partly in order that the very considerable daily traffic in the harbour, both of men-of-war and merchant vessels, should not be impeded by the presence of yet another large hull, swinging round its anchor; and partly because it was very undesirable that the alien enemies conveyed in the ship, well provided as they were with eyes, prism binoculars, and cameras, should thus be enabled to make a fairly leisurely study of the defences of the port, or of the arrivals and sailings (particularly of transports), that might take place during their stay in its waters.

In order to obviate, indeed, even a passing glimpse of the fortified scenery, while *en route* to Bedford Basin, it was stipulated and arranged, before the *Fredrik VIII* left New York, that she was to arrive off Halifax not earlier than 7 P.M.; and thus should pass through the harbour during complete darkness,—for it was February, and there was no moon at the time. A special pilot was sent by rail from Halifax to New York, to join the ship there,—to make the passage in her, and to bring her straight into the harbour, and on into Bedford Basin without any delay.

In spite of these precautions, and of the orders, twice repeated, for the night entry, given at New York to the (Danish) captain of the *Fredrik VIII*, the vessel arrived at 9 A.M., in full daylight; and before anything could be done to prevent it, she had come most of the way up the harbour, before being turned back by the patrol vessel, and given orders to wait outside until the evening.

By this means, two excellent if fleeting views were obtained by the passengers of the defences—once on entering, and once on leaving; but as all cameras and films were relentlessly collected by us later on, no permanent record remained with them to support and embellish mental impressions; and probably little advantage was derived from this characteristic outpouring of German war funds, on behalf of "Intelligence."

It has already been remarked that the month was February; and in the pleasant climate of that part of Nova Scotia, this means a winter banquet, with, for *hors d'œuvres*, bitter frost, proceeding to a thick brown soup, that is dished up in the brimming streets by the next day's alternation of rain, snow, and thaw, and is speedily followed

by prolonged courses of Arctic conditions.

With their arrival, the steep wet hillsides of Halifax turn into ice glissades; the sea congeals, sending up, as it does so, thick wisps of a vapour resembling steam in all but temperature, and, in the course of a few days, Bedford Basin is covered with a sheet of ice that is from one foot to three feet in thickness.

The harbour itself, however, is only ice-bound along those parts of its shores where the tidal streams are least felt. Floes, together with smaller chunks of ice, broken off from the edge of the Bedford Basin sheet and elsewhere, sail up and down the tidal fairway continuously; fairly innocuous to strongly built steamships, but real dangers, with their sharp corners, and sullen, unresilient bulk, to small craft, and especially to wooden-sided man-of-war steamboats.

It was into scenery and conditions of this nature that the *Fredrik VIII* penetrated on the evening of February 16, 1917. H.M.S. *Devonshire*, the British cruiser detailed to carry out the examination, had already on that day forced her way from the harbour through the thickening ice into a convenient part of Bedford Basin, and had anchored there to await her unwilling guest.

It was nearly 10 P.M. before the Danish steamer, forcing for herself another lane through the heavy ice-sheet, brought up at anchor at a couple of hundred yards' distance.

The *Devonshire's* steamboats, carrying the boarding officer and armed guard to take military charge of the vessel, were altogether unable to cut their way through the ice even for this short distance. They were therefore compelled to go back along the already congealing lane made in the wake of the *Devonshire* on her advance that afternoon into the basin, until reaching the point, nearly a mile away, where the track of the *Fredrik VIII* crossed it, and then to turn sharply about and to follow up the wide path in the ice just made by the latter vessel, and so fetch up alongside her at her anchorage.

As this journey had to be done in thick darkness, amidst large and dangerous blocks of ice floating in both lanes, it may be imagined that it was one of considerable difficulty; and it was not until after midnight that the welcome signal was flashed across to the *Devonshire* that all was safely accomplished.

The Great Search began at seven o'clock on the following morning.

According to International Law, the right of visit and search of neutral merchant vessels in war-time, by belligerents, may alone be exercised by the armed naval forces of the Crown, or republic, and, until the late war, on the high seas only.

It is thus illegal for a civilian, or even a civilian Department of State, to undertake such a search; and if searches were still to be made on the high seas (more especially if the sea

were high), one wonders what the sentiments would be of any civilian Department confronted with such a duty!

The size of modern vessels, often thirty to fifty times that of the ships of the Good Old Days, the quantity and complexity of their cargoes, the vast variety of stow-holes and "pockets," outside the legitimate holds, suitable for the conveyance of contraband, the armies of individuals they can and do carry, each one of them a possible *contrabandista*, have combined to render search on the high seas in these days a mere futility; and, for the mutual convenience of both hunter and prey (since escape is impossible), the operation usually takes place in harbour.

The nice point arises, however, when a vessel is brought for search into a port such as Halifax, where the Government is "Dominion," and has no naval forces of its own available for the purpose, as to how far, taking its stand on the sovereignty of the three-mile limit, that domination can be exercised. Who was to conduct and be in charge of the visit and search on this occasion—the British Navy or the Canadian Government? The point was so nice that nothing was done to interfere with, or to spoil its niceness.

A multitude (whom no man could number, as it varied from day to day), somewhere in the region of 200 officials, male and female, was sent, or lent (one never knew which) by the Canadian Government, to "assist" in the search.

It will be realised that the simple sailor was, no doubt, entirely unfitted to deal with such matters as censorship of letters (in many languages), or, still more, with the laying bare of the secrets of the female Hun, of whom, in this case, considerable numbers existed. It would have spoilt his simplicity. Thus, in these two matters of languages and ladies alone, the expert and the female expert were both required, thoroughly to deal with the situation.

Besides these, sent by the Canadian Post Office and Customs respectively, were many from the Police, and Immigration Departments, the latter being especially skilled in wrong 'uns, and their passports.

A search of the most penetrating nature was thus possible; and very soon after it began, the obviousness of its character as a naval affair forced itself to the front, for several excellent reasons.

A large passenger steamer, such as the *Fredrik VIII*, is, as every one who has travelled by water knows, an amazing warren of passages, with ladder-ways, gangways, doors, skylights, and hatches leading to decks, saloons, cabins, and other compartments.

Not only had the person of each inhabitant of the ship (about 920 in number, including the crew) to be examined in turn, but also the cabin, and part of the ship he or she inhabited; and, as soon as the personal search was over, those who had been "gone through"

(to put it vulgarly), could not be permitted to mingle with those who had not.

Similarly, access could not be granted to the great unsearched, to cabins and places already scrutinised. Contraband letters, &c., would instantly have found their way into them; and the work would have been all to do again. Also, it was quite impossible to "do" the whole of the ship and passengers in one day (as a matter of fact, it took ten), and thus arose the necessity for armed force, in the form of sentries by day and by night at every possible point of access to already searched cabins, to ensure the isolation of their occupants. At one time there were forty-eight of such sentries about the ship.

This was the first of the naval reasons that manifested itself, and the second was like unto it.

Almost the first of the orders given to the *Fredrik VIII* stated that no communication of any kind whatever would be permitted between ship and shore, whether by individuals, by letter, or by telegram; and the wireless apparatus was dismantled on her arrival.

Thus was the theory of a "High Seas" search maintained; and great was the discomfiture of the newspaper folk in consequence. Some of these had even taken passage in the *Fredrik VIII* from New York, intending to get off at Halifax, and thence return home, full of stories. But with the *Fredrik VIII* they sailed, full to the brim, yet silent—packages, as it were, of gramophone records—to Europe!

The proper carrying out of this order was ensured by more sentries, posted at every gangway, and by a constant boat-patrol. The latter, it may be said, was greatly assisted (and also circumscribed) by the Arctic conditions of the sea: the thick ice-sheet, seamed by lanes and patches of open water, entirely preventing access, either by foot over the ice, or by anything that floated, except the larger-sized steam launches, capable of ice-breaking, with which there could be no secrecy of movement.

A third naval argument was conveyed and intimated by the presence of officers of the *Devonshire*, with detachments of her men under them, at every search (save those, of course, in which Die Frauen were involved); as it was realised that the German official, quite properly, would consider the whole operation to be an act of war, and, as such, would resent its being undertaken by a mere civilian in plain clothes.

Practically every officer of the cruiser, of whatever branch, took part in the proceedings, with the Commander in charge. They formed the constant and accepted referees on disputed points; they gave dignity and point to the whole proceeding, and by their presence lent to the search its proper military aspect. Without them, indeed, it would have something resembled the ordeal of an emigrant steamer in peace time in the clutches of an

unusually drastic Customs authority.

Of our assistant searchers, indeed, both male and female, it may be said that their inquisitiveness had its only rival in the X-ray apparatus. With long experience they insisted, for example, on the removal of all "dentures," to see if, between the plate and the roof of the mouth, 'twixt false and true, there might lie any delicately secreted document. The tongue, we know, may be an unruly member, but the teeth, anyway, might be counted on for retention. In fact, from the crown of the head, including the "taking down" of the most elegant *coiffures* (whatever may be the German equivalent), to the sole of the foot, they investigated every possibility of the human form as a place of concealment, extending even to false toe-nails laid over the real article.

Hiding-places so recondite would scarcely have occurred to uninstructed seamen; and even in their duties as sentries they were not always so *rusé* as was necessary under present circumstances. One grand lady who, having been searched, was now being guarded from contact with the others, was, fortunately, caught in time by one of the officers, just succeeding in getting through the cordon. She had first attempted to do so (but unsuccessfully) by cajolery; and then in the best melodramatic manner—"Unhand me, wretch!"—was pushing past a sentry and his fixed bayonet, which the poor man felt could not suitably be used for impaling "a lady." On being stopped by the officer, she attempted tears, and adduced the necessity of going to her starving baby on the (unsearched) deck below. Inquiry then elicited that it had been—of course purposely—arranged by her that she should have her cabin on one deck, her nurse and baby on a second, and her husband on a third, thus offering irresistible claims for free passage between them.

It was next found that the "baby" was a well-grown boy of three or four years, and not "starving" at all; and on his being stripped for search, before reunion with his mother, he was found to be a walking letter-box. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ!*

But it must be recorded that though none of our victims exhibited any enjoyment in the processes of investigation (in which we may sympathise), there was not usually any rudeness or opposition offered. The tenor was one rather of injured and outraged innocence, with remarks as to the absurdity of the search, and the important character given to it. One and all, however, were shocked at the irreverence shown towards the holy baggage of the Ambassador, and towards that shrine, his cabin!

Besides providing sentries and boat-patrols, the *Devonshire's* ship's company were engaged in overhauling every hole and corner of the ship, and in assisting the Carpenter's

party in removing panelling in the cabins, opening or piercing mattresses and cushions, searching ventilating shafts (always very fruitful for letters), and going through the many hundreds of lockers and drawers in the ship.

Whilst the deck hands and others were thus employed, practically the whole of the engine-room department of the *Devonshire*, with their officers, were engaged in the search of the coal bunkers, engines, auxiliary engines, and boilers of the *Fredrik VIII.* The coal was all turned over, the boilers were emptied and examined in turn, and the main engines and auxiliaries moved, so that any documents or other contraband which might have been concealed in them should be destroyed, or rendered illegible.

Even the cold-storage room was emptied of its contents, not unavailingly!

Letters were found in every possible part of the ship, and, together with "dental rubber" in small flat pieces, formed a large proportion of the contraband discovered.

A spare cabin in the *Fredrik VIII* was allotted to the Commander of the *Devonshire* to serve as an "office," and occasionally he slept there, when night searches (usually very prolific) were to be undertaken.

One day, it occurred to him to examine this cabin, and there, sure enough, in the chest of drawers and elsewhere, confident Huns, thinking that here at least, in the Hunter's very lair, there would be no searching, had hopefully "posted" the forbidden mail-matter, and had deposited the illicit slabs of rubber. The latter was probably to be regarded less as an act of patriotism—though Germany was woefully in need of rubber—than as a commercial venture. "Dental rubber" is a highly concentrated and pure form of the substance, and was, at that juncture, worth in Germany at least ten times what had to be paid for it in the States.

The Canadian Customs searchers were quite inflexible in their condemnation of everything that could in any way be described as "contraband." Articles found on the persons of the searched, or in their cabins, were collected in separate bags, each labelled with the name of the owner, and sent ashore daily to the Customs Office for closer investigation. Everything, on this second overhaul, found to be legally contraband, was placed in the Prize Court immediately — a bourne from which no Hun traveller's goods ever returned!—and all that was not so disposed of was returned to the ship.

In this way, before representations could be made, the little gold lockets of sentimental ladies, or other ornaments (the "precious metals" being contraband), and such things as sponge-bags, vulcanite toilet-table articles, and hot-water bottles (all of them containing rubber), were resolutely "pinched" and carried

off ashore. Even private stores of tins of biscuits, sausages, and other *Delicatessen* (being "foodstuffs"), were removed!

With the temperature standing at 7° below zero, the removal of the hot bottles raised so bitter a cry of lamentation, that it reached the ears of Superior Authority,—this was at an early stage of the proceedings, when the methods of working between naval and Canadian searchers had not developed into the happy smoothness that was reached soon afterwards,—but, alas! too late; the hot bottles and all other "rubber goods" were already in the Prize Court! *Rien ne va plus!* A much sympathising Commander, knowing only too well the temperature of "aboard-ship" beds, removed by so small a space from the level of the frozen sea, found himself compelled to go ashore and buy in the town several bottles, to give to the more delicate of these unfortunate German ladies, replacing those forcibly removed. After this, arrangements were come to, to prevent interference in the future with these small personal comforts.

But apart from these easy "discoveries" of contraband, the ship herself yielded, daily, considerable quantities of letters, rubber, cameras, films (including cinematograph), unpermitted amounts of money,—in one case some thousands of pounds worth of notes,—and other forbidden articles.

Probably the best "haul" of any, however, was what came to be known as "The Scandinavian Trunk."

This was a brand-new steel portmanteau, of ordinary appearance and medium dimensions, found, in the normal course of search, under the bed-place in one of the cabins. On being drawn forth into the light, it was seen to be heavily sealed over the lock, there being eight or nine large imprints of the Scandinavian Consul-General at New York, on a strip of material stretched over the small elevation carrying the hasp and keyhole. A label, bearing the name and address of the passenger who claimed it, was attached to one of the handles. On being questioned, this person—a "square-head"—declared that the trunk contained diplomatic documents, which he, as a "diplomatic courier," was conveying to Europe, to be handed to his Government; and that, consequently, it was immune from search. Now the law and custom on such occasions is that the seal of an Ambassador or Minister is sacred, and may not be broken; but any other seal, including that of consuls and consuls-general, has no special sanctity and may be ignored, if needs be; and at first it was proposed that this should be done, and the contents of the trunk revealed.

Suspicion lay on them from the outset, for, in the first place, no permission had been given for this particular diplomatic despatch-box to be conveyed in the *Fredrik VIII;*

and, in the second, the person accompanying the trunk, though he described himself as a "diplomatic courier," on examination of his passport, turned out to be nothing of the kind, and was merely a commercial gentleman from New York, revisiting his native land, who had undertaken charge of it.

The trunk was therefore seized, but in view of the possibly grave international trouble involved in taking violent measures with it, information was first sought from Washington. The reply came that the Scandinavian Ministry there stated that the trunk had been sealed by them, and sent by rail, but unattended, to New York. It had arrived there, they said, with the seals broken; the inference being that if any improper, non-Scandinavian documents should now be found in the trunk, they must have been inserted *en route* between Washington and New York; and that the Consul-General at New York had resealed the trunk and sent it on by the *Fredrik VIII.*

It was stated, further, that it contained only the documents relating to some commercial business. Notwithstanding this, however, the Minister would not agree to send an agent to Halifax, who should open and examine the contents in the presence of British officials.

The "business," whatever it was, must have been a large one, as the papers concerning it weighed 100 lbs. It was strange, too, that, when found, there was not remaining the faintest trace of the original sealing at Washington: all that could be seen on the new and shiny varnish were the fresh red imprints of the seal of the Consul-General, New York.

By some means or another, the fact of the trunk being on board the *Fredrik VIII*, with suggestions as to its suspicious character, leaked into the American papers; and it chanced that, only a short time previously, the revelation had been made to the world, by the United States Government, of the discovery of papers divulging certain proposals of Herr Zimmermann (the German Foreign Secretary) to the Mexican Government. The two facts were immediately seized on by the Press and connected together. Huge headlines appeared: "Zimmermann's Papers found in Bernstorff's Trunk," followed by an account, apparently circumstantial, of the finding of the papers on board the *Fredrik VIII* in the Scandinavian trunk, and dwelling on their importance.

It was amusing to read all this, and then, in the same glance, to see, with its seals all quite intact, "Bernstorff's Trunk" (so-called) reposing in safety in a locked cabin on board H.M.S. *Devonshire!*

Eventually, under orders from the Admiralty, the trunk (still intact) was sent across the Atlantic to their Lordships by H.M.S. *Berwick*, which vessel happened at the time to be sailing for England.

It was escorted by an armed guard from the Admiralty to the Foreign Office, and dealt with there in, no doubt, fitting fashion.

As to its contents, who shall say what, actually, they were? One may at least hope that among them was the Last Straw. The trunk reached England in the middle of March. On April 5th, 1917, the United States formally declared war on Germany.

As to the *Fredrik VIII*, after ten days of as meticulous a search as any ship ever had, she sailed for Denmark on the evening of February 27th, where, in due course, she arrived in safety. The law of "no correspondence with the shore" was so far intermitted, that all letters that had arrived for the ship during her detention in Halifax were handed to their addressees (after censoring) just as the ship sailed; and similarly, but at the last moment also, letters from the ship for the shore were accepted for censorship and forwarding. An undertaking was given by the Captain of the *Fredrik VIII*, on the returning to him of his wireless apparatus, that it would not be employed for private messages until three days after leaving Canada, and then only to a very limited extent—an undertaking that was honourably kept.

By these means much pro-German propaganda, and many "Protests" arising from the unsparing and scientific thoroughness of the British search, never saw the light; but we had the satisfaction of reading in the local papers of March 13th, after the Huns had reached Copenhagen, that Bernstorff was "Peeved," and had been one of the Protestants.

One can hardly believe that he, or any of his gang, would have been so credulous as to suppose that the search would have been "nominal"; yet it appears they really thought that the Ambassadorial, and even the Consular, baggage would have been exempt. Nevertheless, and for all that, we were told that on the voyage from New York to Halifax, the steamer's wake resembled that of the hare in a paper-chase, as sheet after sheet of (no doubt) extremely interesting "archives" were torn up and disposed of in the all-effacing sea—"*spurlos versenkt!*"

All—that is, except what was in the trunk!

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE RAILWAY STRIKE—AN ANARCHIST CONSPIRACY—THE FOLLY OF MR THOMAS—WHO IS BEHIND HIM?—THE DEPRESSION OF THE BOLSHEVISTS—THE PROLETARIAN AND THE FINE ARTS—SAMUEL BUTLER'S LIFE—AN UNCOMFORTABLE MAN—THE CREED OF A MIDDLE-CLASS RADICAL.

IT is impossible to find the smallest excuse for the infamy of the railway strike. The men had no grievance. They were well paid; they were in full enjoyment of all the blessings of nationalisation which guard the delicate ecstatic souls who work with their hands from the suspicion of "wage-slavery." Their wages were assured them until next March, and had they been dissatisfied they had six clear months in which to discuss the question of terms. As they had no excuse to strike, so they employed the basest method. They chose the lightning strike to expose to the world not their grievances, but what they believed to be their power. And thus they ranked themselves at once with the professors of anarchy, with their comrades Lenin and Trotsky.

The lightning strike is an instrument of revolution, and nothing less. It does not affect industrialism in the slightest. It does not aim at producing higher wages or shorter hours. It is an attempt to drag the poor, silly, sheepish, honest working men into a civil war of which they would not approve, if perchance they understood it. Mr Thomas, with his cynical levity, declared when the men had gone back to work that the country had been very near revolution. He ought to know, as the strike was all his own doing; and that he, with the pitiful example of Russia before his eyes, should encourage a revolution, proves him a reckless adventurer, to whom the affairs of no class in the community should be trusted for an hour.

That is the worst quality of such men as Mr Thomas—an ingrained frivolity. To appease their own vanity they would, if they could, bring the whole country to ruin. They make war upon the nation for a whim, and still pretend to find some merit in their egoism. Their blatant arrogance spares no class. The cruelty with which they thought they could afflict Great Britain would have injured their own friends far more bitterly than any other class. They recked not of it. The leaders were carried home to their comfortable villas in expensive motor-cars, and if the sad dupes, who pay for these luxuries, were reduced to 12s. a week, that was the fortune of war,

and could not be helped. Even if there was nothing to fight about, even if there could be no legitimate discussion for some months to come, the leaders would have a good chance of showing their "power," and of proving that the community could not dispense with their services for a single day.

It is clear enough, then, what Mr Thomas and his backers expected. In three days they hoped to be the masters of Britain. They vainly imagined that they would be joined by the other unions, and that the prostrate country would cry aloud for mercy. In their view a strike should be a struggle, in which all the fighting is done on one side. It is for them to attack; it is for the vast majority to take this attack lying down, and to bewail in tears the severity of the blows wherewith it is belaboured. That the majority did not take the assault lying down has filled them with indignation. The kind of "fair-play" they understand is the "fair-play" which permits their antagonist to have his arms tied behind his back, that blows may be more easily rained upon his unsheltered face. Mr Ramsay Macdonald, for instance, is piously enraged that any obstacle should have been put in the path of his friends. "To fight a government," says he, "is to fight the political organisation of the State." Of course it is, and if he and his friends shirk the fight, they should have thought of that simple truth before. "Public funds were lavished"—thus goes on the rejected of Leicester—"on posters giving *ex parte* statements, in advertisements, in intelligence department. The Army was used to break the strike, volunteers were enlisted to keep things going, a citizen army was called for." Did you ever hear of such infamy? Here were a body of earnest leaders ready to bring the community to starvation, and the community insisted upon keeping things going! The community, in brief, is so pestilent an animal, that when it is attacked it defends itself; and Mr Macdonald suggests that "the Prime Minister and the Geddeses" should pay for it all out of their own pockets. But he takes good care to claim immunity for the funds of the Trade Unions.

Mr Thomas's attack upon the country resembled both in its cause and in its result the Kaiser's attack upon Europe. The Kaiser chose his own time for going to war, because he thought he would be easily victorious over an unprepared foe. Mr Thomas sprang a lightning strike upon us with the same amiable motive. Both the autocrats feigned hypocritically a profound sorrow for the consequences of their misdeeds. As the Kaiser's "heart bled for Louvain," so Mr Thomas found the day of the strike the saddest day of his life. The Kaiser's heart bled more plenteously at defeat, we may be sure, and

the day when Mr Thomas, who in his own melodramatic phrase had "his back to the wall," discovered that the wall tottered, was far sadder than the day when his obedient serfs followed him to the strike, without knowing what it was all about.

But Britain does not like tyrants, from whatever class they spring, and the strike has shown us that the old spirit is still alive. The strike came, and found the nation prepared. To the complete discomfiture of Mr Thomas and his friends, the country was not exposed to a vast deal of suffering. The amiable gentlemen who hoped to starve the whole people, were gravely disappointed. The only thing upon which they could fairly congratulate themselves was the dislocation of trade. For the rest, we suffered nothing worse than inconvenience. Our letters came some hours later than usual. Sometimes we missed our newspapers. But none was hungry, and not even the children were deprived of milk. Can a more pitiful failure be imagined? Here was Mr Thomas, as we have said, with his back against the wall, and nobody cared a bit. He has not even the consolation, not always denied to an unsuccessful general, of counting those he has slain.

In Mr Macdonald's phrase, he set out to fight the political organisation of the State, and he found that organisation perfect. We cannot praise too highly the zeal and foresight of the Government. We are proud of the speed and efficiency with which innumerable volunteers did the work to which they are not accustomed. The failure of the strike has restored the nation's confidence in itself. Never again shall we be afraid of a turbulent greedy minority. Five hundred thousand railwaymen are not enough to disconcert forty millions, not even though they use the weapons of revolution. Above all, it has proved to all that indispensability and the power of doing mischief are not one and the same thing. An ill-disposed sailor might do his utmost to sink a ship, and might succeed, were he not watched; but his wickedness is not evidence that the Navy depends upon him, and that if he had his rights he would take the Admiral's place. Henceforth even the working men will begin to discriminate, and it will be brought home to them through the cynicism of the autocrat, Mr Thomas, that no clique nor class in this country shall ever be its tyrant.

And this is not the only benefit conferred upon us by the strike. We new know Mr Thomas for what he really is. So long has the leader of the railwaymen blown hot and cold, and expressed within a few weeks wholly dissimilar views, that the House of Commons began to take him for a statesman. During the war he asserted at the top of his voice that if conscription

passed into law he could not hold back his men from striking. His men, far more loyally inspired than he, would not have struck upon so base a pretext, and when they remained at work he took all the credit for their decent behaviour. Again, not long since he paid a visit to America, and when he came home he was eloquent about increased production and abstinence from strikes. Thus he did his best to secure his own position, no matter what turned up; and as he was committed to both sides, or in other words to neither, the other vote-catchers were lost in admiration. And then, on the eve of quarter-day, a day well chosen by the mischief-makers, he declared war upon the State, and none but a violent partisan or an alien revolutionary will ever call him a statesman again.

It might, indeed, seem strange that Mr Thomas should have been guilty of the supreme folly, if we did not consider his character. Mr Thomas is neither strong nor clever. He keeps his hold upon the railwaymen, as other labour leaders keep their hold upon their unions, by a trick of rhetoric. His victims gladly subscribe their money to him, because they think that he gives them their money's worth in words. He talks to them loudly and often, and all might have been well — he might even have walked still in the path of moderation, or at least of uncertainty — had not Mr Cramp forced the pace. Like many another man of his kind, Mr Thomas set the ball rolling, and thought that he could stop it by lifting up his hands. But though he is a labour leader, he cannot work miracles, and the ball of defiance rolls down the hill until it reaches the road of anarchy. Poor Mr Thomas, indeed, could not but recognise that, if he would keep up with the braggart Mr Cramp, he must renounce the "statesman-like" policy of facing both ways. For Mr Cramp, let it be remembered, sticks at nothing. He finds it difficult to bring his great mind down to mere squabbles about shillings and hours. "Whenever you say" —these were the plain words he spoke some six months ago —"you are ripe for industrial revolution I am with you, but not for a trade dispute." That was the kind of threat which Mr Thomas had to echo, and so he led the railwaymen out to what Mr Lloyd George called an anarchist conspiracy.

And not only is the great Mr Cramp indifferent to trade disputes, not only does he breathe the rarer air of revolution, but he boasts that he will be content with nothing less than the earth. Even if he got the earth, he would still be angry that somebody else had a share of the sun. In these terms did he recently exhort the serfs of his union: "They must seek not merely to obtain better conditions, but ultimately to own the

earth and all that therein is." Why the railwaymen must own the earth more than any other set of strikers we don't know. We do not live in trains alone, and Mr Thomas's failure has proved most happily that so long as the high-roads are left us we can dispense with the railway. We burn coals in our houses when we can get them with Mr Smillie's kind approval; we eat bread, and some of us do not refrain from beef and mutton. Why should not the miners and the bakers and the butchers all clamour for the earth and all that therein is? Alas, there is only one earth, and that is not enough to satisfy the greed of them all! Perhaps Mr Cramp will send the members of the other unions to Mars or the moon, and bid them make the best of them when they get there. At any rate, the earth is his, and he won't let Mr Thomas forget it.

Mr Cramp is behind Mr Thomas. And who is behind Mr Cramp? The alien Jews, the brothers and the cousins of the men who have destroyed Russia, and who would rejoice to see all Europe in the grip of misery and starvation. "The Government," said Mr Lloyd George the day the strike began, "have reason to believe that it has been engineered for some time by a small but active body of men, who wrought tirelessly and insidiously to exploit the labour organisations of this country for subversive ends." There in a few lines is the whole discreditable story. The life of England is interrupted and embittered by a gang of scoundrels, who wish for nothing so much as England's discomfiture. They have been active during the war. They are still more active now that peace has been signed. They belong to the Jewish race, which now for the first time for centuries has embraced a united policy — a policy of destruction. Some of them come from Germany, others from Russia, and they all agree in the wish and the will to subvert our Christian civilisation. Whatever measure of success they have gained is a disgrace to the leaders of labour, who have not exposed the traitors in their midst and suggested their own nationality. Their activity is a disgrace to the Government, which knows who they are and what they are doing, and yet pretends that they have not yet placed themselves within reach of the law. If the arm of justice is not long enough to reach them, then the arm of justice should be lengthened. So long as by a quibble these aliens escape punishment, the country is unsafe. The law should be instantly altered so far as to make it criminal to preach sedition or to possess seditious pamphlets. The minds of simple men are easily inflamed by words, either spoken or printed, and simple men must be protected against the baleful influence

of words, which are more dangerous than gunpowder or dynamite. We do not want Bolshevism within the borders of Great Britain, and we shall exclude it only by keeping a vigilant eye upon the aliens who would destroy our land, and by punishing with the utmost rigour those who instil the poison of treasherous words into the ears of our working classes.

And what of the railway men themselves, who went on strike at the mere bidding of their leaders, and knew not what they were striking about? They are not anarchists, nor are they conspirators. They are the slaves of a few untrammelled despots, and they obey without asking questions. The world never saw a crueller autocrat than the leader of a subservient trade-union. "Depend upon it," said Mr Cobden in his one and only utterance of wisdom, "nothing can be got by fraternising with trades-unions. They are founded upon principles of brutal tyranny and monopoly. I would rather live under a Dey of Algiers than a trade committee." And a Dey of Algiers is a sucking dove compared with Mr Thomas. Here is a telegram which that eminent Radical and socialist sent to the railway men of Ireland: "Please clearly understand that Irish railway men must not cease work until they receive instructions from me. This is imperative, and must be obeyed." "Instructions from me," indeed! "Must be obeyed," forsooth! What then becomes of democracy and freedom and all the other glorious palladia? They weigh less than a feather against the word of the despot, Mr Thomas, and the sooner the railway men recognise the pit of slavery into which they have fallen the better will it be for them.

It is they who are asked to play the tragic part. The most of them are plain, hard-working, honest men, who are highly paid for work that for the most part is unskilled. They want nothing else than a chance to go about their duty unhampered, and if their minds were not poisoned by their leaders and by the traitors who reach them at second hand, they would be happy and contented. They know well enough what they owe to the State, which supports them. They do not, by themselves, believe that it is a meritorious action to attempt to starve women and children to death, to treat horses and cattle with the cruelty of neglect. But they do not know what liberty is. They are not free to do what is right in their own eyes. The Dey of Algiers bids them lay down their tools; they obey, as if they were incapable of exercising judgment or of making up their own minds; and to-day, we believe, they are heartily ashamed of themselves.

The Government would have done better if it had refused to save Mr Thomas's face, which is not worth saving, and had allowed the strike to

last another week or two. The best way to avoid strikes in future is to prove that all the suffering is not borne by the public. For the rest, it may be said that the strike was not wholly in vain. In the first place, it proved that no class is indispensable to the community—the railway men least of all—and that the upper and middle classes do not intend to become the slaves of an organised minority. In the second place, it has struck the death-knell of nationalisation. Some "brutal tyrants" have gone so far as to say that they will resort to direct action if the mines are not forthwith nationalised. But Mr Thomas has cut away the best and commonest of their arguments. It has been proclaimed upon a thousand platforms that the only method of avoiding strikes is to accept nationalisation. And here are the railroads, administered by the Government for the benefit of the nation, made the first prey of the hotheads. Moreover, it is satisfactory to note that the British Bolshevists are profoundly depressed. A meeting held at the Albert Hall, which should have celebrated the triumph of proletarian autocracy, was shrouded in unhappy gloom. When Mrs Snowden appealed, in the finest manner of melodrama, for ferocity, she was answered by laughter. "No Government," she screamed, "need fear a company like this, so long as it laughs about a matter of this sort. . . . When they see you with your lips between your teeth, and too full of anger and hate to hiss their hated names, when they see you with your eyes too sombre with a sense of the wrongs of Europe to laugh, then they will be afraid—but not yet."

If Mrs Snowden desires an audience that will hiss and hate, she will not find it in Britain. Her best chance is to seek it among Mr Macdonald's friends—the Germans. They are better equipped for the business of hatred than we are, and they are finished adepts in the art of hissing. Mr Macdonald himself cannot compete with Mrs Snowden in sound and fury. He assumed a dismal tone, and owned it was all up. "Do not let us live in a fool's paradise." Why, indeed, should they? "This is a magnificent meeting! But what a magnificent crowd there is outside! As I looked at you just now the great thing that struck me was not your strength but your impotence." These are the wisest and truest, perhaps the only wise and true, words that Mr Macdonald ever spoke. There is a magnificent crowd outside, and as it represents a vast majority, why should these eminent democrats desire to interfere with it? Their interference can but recoil upon themselves, and if only they will take Mr Macdonald's statement for a final expression of the truth, and confess their impotence, they will lead happier lives, and will not

waste their considerable energies in a vain attempt to disturb the peace of Britain.

The strike found the nation organised. The organisation must never be relaxed. For the next few years our destiny will be uncertain. A successful strike at this crisis of our fate might involve us in Bolshevism, whose hope and attainment combine in an equality of hunger. And we shall be called again to defend ourselves against this group or that which happens to want the earth. That we can win by energy and forethought has now been proved. We have faced with equanimity that most dangerous form of revolution—a lightning strike; and what we have done once we shall do again. A record will be kept, no doubt, of the volunteers who so speedily and efficiently came to the help of the country, and it is to be hoped that the citizen army will presently be not an aspiration, but a properly drilled body of men, ready to protect the nation against anarchist conspiracies.

The proletarian, as he likes to be called, does as little good as he can to the community, and sits patiently still when his leaders regret his impotence to do mischief. The community, on the other hand, thinks tenderly, and often foolishly, of the proletarian. It would, if it could, lead him by the hand into the quiet meadows of prosperity. It would teach him, for nothing, a vast deal that he has no wish to learn. It would travel far upon the road of folly, if it thought that it might add to his pleasure. Here, for instance, is the National Gallery ready to destroy its worth and beauty, if only it can serve the proletarian. It complains, rightly enough, that the proletarian is unable to distinguish good pictures from bad — an inability which he shares impartially with the rest of mankind. And the directors of the National Gallery propose to aid the ignorant by gathering together in one gallery such pictures of every school as they esteem the best. For many reasons the proposal should be condemned by all the friends of art. The only proper arrangement is that now adopted—by schools and centuries. Thus we may see for ourselves the progress of art, and detect the natural influence of one master upon another — his neighbour and contemporary.

But not merely is the present method of display the right one. The method proposed for the future is wholly deplorable, because, in the first place, it will lead to a vast deal of false admiration; in the second, it will be founded upon the dogmatism of the moment. The supreme value of a national gallery is that therein the spectator—whether he be a privileged proletarian or a common citizen who works with his head — may find for himself the pictures

which chime with his taste or humour. Every one who enters a gallery, and is at the pains to use his eyes, instinctively exercises his judgment, and his judgment is worthless when it is not independent. The signpost kind of criticism, which points the way to masterpieces, is the prolific begetter of insincerity. The liking for one picture or another is of no good, unless it come unbidden to the eye and brain. And he who pretends to admire a work of art, because somebody else tells him that he ought to, might just as well sit at home and read about it in a book.

Indeed it is far better that a man should choose to look at what the wise judges regard as a bad picture than that he should echo servilely the eulogy of another. We have no right to delight in anything unless we have discovered its beauty for ourselves. Nothing is ever lawful prey which our own bow and spear have not captured. He who truly prefers Frith's "Derby Day" to the "Battle of Sant' Egidio" will only waste his time if he gaze at Uccello's supreme masterpiece. And that masterpiece will not mean anything more to him than it does merely because somebody has told him that it deserves a place apart from the rest. Such is one objection to the policy of gathering the *chefs-d'œuvre* of every school into one gallery. The other is no less weighty. A taste in pictures is necessarily fluctuating. Nobody has yet discovered a sure and permanent means of separating the sheep from the goats. To-day's heresy in art, as in all matters of opinion, becomes the gospel of to-morrow. We marvel at our forefathers' lack of taste, and our grandsons will laugh at ours, no doubt, as gross and monstrous. There was a time when Carlo Dolci and Correggio were preferred before Titian and Veronese, when Velasquez appeared far inferior to Murillo. This time may come again, or worse taste still may be ahead of us. Who knows? Perhaps we shall destroy all our old masters, as Signor Marinetti demands of us, and make room in our galleries for the works of Matisse and Picasso. But whatever happens in the future, we may take it for granted that taste will shift and change, and that no sooner has the wretched proletarian been instructed to regard the masterpieces of Uccello and Titian and Velasquez, of Ver Meer and De Hooghe, as the best we have, than these masterpieces will be banished to a cellar, and a fresh lot be brought up to take their place. It may be useless to dispute about taste; but at least let us cling to that taste which is our own, and decline to admire that which the directors of the National Gallery select for our admiration, with no better reason than because they have ordered it.

Moreover, the proletarian believes (or did believe sometime

since) in the sanctity of the ballot. And if we are to have a *Salon Carré*, he will not be happy until he has decided by a bare majority what shall be hung upon its walls. We have been told a thousand times that the vote of the odd man is a far finer thing than virtue or taste or wisdom, and the proletarian, if he be given his way, will not bow the knee to any expert. What the majority likes, he will say, is always right, and he will insist upon a plebiscite. We only wish for the immortal glory of folly, that we could see the new *Salon Carré* hung in accord with the wishes of the omnipotent people! It would contain all the painted anecdotes that could be found, all the squares of sentimental canvas that the gallery contained, and all the coloured texts for practical discourses. It would flatter our national vanity, because most of the pictures selected would belong to the British School. But perhaps it is wiser to leave the pictures as they are, arranged after the only prudent fashion, and thus to avoid the risk of a plebiscite.

Mr H. Festing Jones's 'Samuel Butler: A Memoir'[1] is a good example of the biographer's art. It is written by a faithful, if ingenuous, friend. It is candid, as very few biographies are. The author sets down everything in candour, and nothing in malice; and he gives us a true portrait of an uncomfortable man. Perhaps unconsciously he has caught the trick of old Aubrey, and has preserved for us the many odd, foolish traits which differentiated Samuel Butler from his fellows. We all know that he wrote a satire called 'Erewhon,' and that he thought the 'Odyssey' was written by a woman. Mr Jones has told us many other details which, but for his intervention, would have escaped us altogether. For instance, we now discover for our delight that he was accustomed, when he went for a walk, to carry in his waistcoat pocket a homœopathic medicine bottle full of Worcester sauce, that he brushed his hair every night a hundred strokes, fifty on each side, that he always worked in his shirt-sleeves. Now these are the kind of details which we ask for in a biography, and which too often elude our search. And even if Mr Jones had not sketched his hero's achievements sympathetically, as he has, we should still be grateful to him for the patience wherewith he has gathered together such trivial facts as seem to many irrelevant.

Mr Jones, again, has done well to print at length the admirable letters which a devoted lady, Miss Savage, addressed to Butler. For, indeed, Miss Savage should take her place among the best letter-writers of her age. Her wit is constant, and

[1] London: Macmillan & Co.

effortless; her sense of criticism never slumbered; and if she dips her pen in gall, her deft style gives a brilliance to her bitterest sallies. She was ill and unhappy, and hid her misery from her friend with an unfailing courage. Butler himself thought that she had wasted her talents, but she knew best what reserve of energy was left her, after she had successfully fought with the demons of poverty, disease, and disappointment. We gather that she was in love with Butler, who could not return the love of one so ill-favoured as she. We gather also that after her death he was profoundly affected by remorse, and that he honoured her memory as long as he lived. At any rate, she owes the posthumous fame, which surely will be hers, to the care with which he kept her letters, and the piety with which he annotated them. Until death overtook her, she was always at hand with counsel and criticism. She read Butler's books in manuscript, and he gladly accepted her castigation. In brief, his friendship with Miss Savage was the happiest episode in his life, and Mr Jones's biography inevitably declines in interest after the record of her death.

We have said that Samuel Butler was an uncomfortable man, and true it is that he never found solace in this world. He seems to have suffered from the mania of persecution. He thought that the hands of all men were against him. As he says himself, the sense of wrong was omnipresent with him. He believed that he was the deeply injured victim of a ruffian named Pauli, as in truth he was, of his father, of the Darwins. And in truth he had every right to complain of the wicked ingratitude of Pauli, whom he befriended, to whom he gave an allowance which he could not afford, and who basely deceived him. Obviously, we do not know the whole story, and there may be hidden somewhere a kind of extenuation. But, as the story is told by Mr Jones, we can only accept Pauli as such a villain as neither fact nor fiction has yet discovered to us. Even when he was making £900 at the bar and living in such comfort as Butler never aspired to, he was extorting £200 a year from Butler, sometimes paid out of capital, with nothing else than Butler's good-nature for the object of his blackmail. He refused to tell Butler where he lived. He was content to eat Butler's food and to spend Butler's money, and when Butler after his death discovered the rascality of which he had been the dupe for years, discovered also that he left £9000, not a penny of which he bequeathed to Butler, he could not but feel that he had been grievously wronged by one whom he thought his friend.

Butler's professed hatred of his father was, it seems to us, nothing more than a literary

exercise. It chimed with his humour to invent injuries, and by degrees the selfishness and antipathy which he imagined in his father grew under his hand into a monstrous legend. But we do not think, as Mr Jones appears to think, that he was afraid of his father, and that he was driven to adopt the ironic method on purpose to conceal the meaning of his books from the sensitive Canon. To suppose such a folly as this would be to misunderstand Butler and to cut down at its root his artistic sincerity. We can easily believe that 'Erewhon' and the 'Fair Haven' appeared blasphemous to a stout supporter of orthodoxy. We do not believe that Butler would have been disloyal to himself, with no better motive than to placate his father. But it is evident that he had invented a kind of bogey which he called his father, and that it pleased him to display all his cunning in eluding this bogey. When, for instance, he told his father that his own literary reputation was assured, he affected to repent him of his candour, because his father would assuredly be irked by his success. But he was merely embroidering the legend of the wicked parent, and he found in Miss Savage's ingenuity a constant encouragement for his amusing fallacy.

His one-sided quarrel with Charles Darwin and his sons, on the other hand, was sincere enough, and foolishly embittered Butler's whole life. At the outset he thought no praise too great to be lavished on the author of 'The Origin of Species.' "I always delighted in your 'Origin of Species,'" he wrote to Darwin in 1865, "as soon as I read it out in N.Z.; not as knowing anything whatever of natural science, but it enters into so many deeply interesting questions, or rather it suggests so many, that it thoroughly fascinated me." But when he had written 'Evolution Old and New,' and a letter which he addressed to 'The Athenæum' concerning Dr Krause's article on Erasmus Darwin was unanswered by Darwin, Butler attacked Darwin and all his friends with increasing asperity. It does not matter at this time what the dispute was about, Darwin, acting on the advice of Huxley and Leslie Stephen, took no part in it — very properly, as we think; and the slight which Butler thought had been put upon him never for one moment faded from his mind. Thenceforward he imagined himself the victim of a wide conspiracy. He pictured the Darwins as controlling English science and English literature. If a book of his were ill-reviewed or passed over, he saw in the insult or neglect the hand of a Darwin. When he entered his name for the professorship of Fine Art at Cambridge, and Middleton was preferred before him, there was, he was sure, a Darwin at work. When the Cambridge Press declined to publish his life of his grand-

father, it was part of the gigantic plot to undo him. And yet he pretended to find comfort in the refusal. "I confess also," he wrote, "that it is a pleasure to me to be under no sort of obligation to Cambridge; if Cambridge honours the name of Darwin, it is not likely to honour me." He could not get the honoured name out of his mind for an hour. He thought unto the end that his books were boycotted by men of science, "but," as Mr Jones sadly observes, "beyond straws showing the direction of the wind, he had nothing definite to go upon." Straws were enough for him. "My new book," he writes in 1880, "will give old Darwin the best warming that I can arrange to give him, and I think I shall manage a pretty hot one."

The worst of it was for Butler that the mania of persecution filled him also with malice and suspicion. A man who had been Darwin's friend was ever after Butler's enemy. This is what he thought it humorous to write as late as 1902: "A lady told me that she was on the top of a 'bus one afternoon and saw Leslie Stephen cross in front of the 'bus in an undecided sort of way, whereon the driver said, 'Now then, come up, monkey!' I wonder that the earth did not open and swallow him up! What a pity that Leslie Stephen should be so deaf." It is pitiful, this rancour, kept in bottle for more than twenty years. And it was the same temper that made Butler believe that people were always scowling at or ridiculing him. When he lectured upon Homer, he saw the Miss Butchers "glaring" at him, which is absurd, and he went about London with his moral nature wrapped in a cheap cloak of melodrama. He was misunderstood; he was slighted; and while he would have you believe that he cared not a jot for any man's opinion, his sensitive skin was scratched daily. "No schoolmaster," says he with his usual petulance, "after 'Erewhon' and 'The Fair Haven,' would dare to give any book of mine as a prize." Why, indeed, should any schoolmaster select his books for this benign purpose? How furious would Butler have been if he had done it! And what would the wretched schoolboy have thought if he had received one of them as the guerdon of his industry?

The explanation of Butler's character is that he was an intensely vain man, who had missed the world's appreciation. He admits to Miss Savage that he liked flattery, even when he saw through it, and flattery he wanted and too often missed. It was this love of flattery which made him depend, for the most part, upon the society of his inferiors. There is far too much in Mr Jones's Memoir about a servant, called Alfred, who seems to have governed all Butler's uprisings and

downsittings. For those of his contemporaries whom he might have met upon equal terms, he entertained a profound contempt. What he seems to have asked for in his associates was a ready agreement with his views, a quick admiration of his works. There is a kind of pathos in Mr Jones's universal acquiescence. More than once, when Butler asked what he thought of his prose or his music, he replied, "Of course I liked it." Of course he did. Otherwise, he could not have remained Butler's friend for a week. And to be a friend of Butler, a man must have put a whole-hearted ungrudging faith in many strange creeds. He must have believed that Blake, and Dante, and Virgil, and Tennyson, were outside the pale of discussion. He must have believed that the Darwins were malign and wicked men. He must have harboured no doubt that a woman wrote the 'Odyssey.' These are some of the articles of faith to which every friend of Butler's was asked to subscribe, and it is not surprising that he had to depend upon the kindness of few.

And the sad part of it is that Butler's arrogant suspicion was but a shield for a very real humility. He would not acknowledge to the world that he was fallible. He knew it well enough in his heart of hearts. "Above all things," he once wrote, "let no unwary reader believe in *me*. In that I write at all I am among the damned. If he must believe in anything, let him believe in the music of Handel, the painting of Gentile Bellini, and in the thirteenth chapter of St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians." These three things are good to believe in, and probably, when Butler was alone, they were enough for him. In the presence of others, what was necessary was a community of hate. Butler hated almost as many things as Hazlitt says Wordsworth hated. He hated all the poets except Homer and Shakespeare, although he had read very few of them. He hated Rossetti and his face and his manner and his poetry and his friends. He hated Goethe and Carlyle, as well he might. He hated Lamb because Ainger had edited his works. He hated all men of science because they were not hostile to Darwin; and he hated all scholars because none of them believed that the 'Odyssey' was written by Nausicaa. "I have never read, and never, I am afraid, shall read," he wrote, "a line of Keats or Shelley or Coleridge or Wordsworth, except such extracts as I occasionally see in a Royal Academy Catalogue." Nor did he see that his ignorances and his hatreds proved, not his cleverness, but the grave limitations of his intelligence. Only a fool or a charlatan condemns what he has never read out of the depth of his own "superiority." And despite, or perhaps on account of, the catholicity of his hatred, Butler had in him

something of the middle-class Radical. In his circumscribed assurance he resembled Mr Bernard Shaw. When you find a man revolting loudly against the middle class, you know that he is irrevocably merged within it. Butler was a homœopath and an anti-vaccinator. But he wrote 'Erewhon' and 'The Way of all Flesh' and 'O God! O Montreal!' and therefore let us forget his 'Odyssey' and his 'Note-books' and his manifold vanities and ill-tempers. Let us even be grateful to Mr H. F. Jones, who has allowed us to see, through a cloud of irrelevancies, the portrait of an arrogant, wayward, and talented man.

THE LITTLE ADVENTURE.

BEING THE STORY OF THE RUSSIAN RELIEF FORCE.

BY GILBERT SINGLETON GATES, 46TH R.F., R.R.F.

I.

PARK ROYAL, N.W. Empty huts, deserted parade-grounds, overgrown lawns, occasional daffodils. There in the April sunshine and showers of Peace year the Russian Relief Force was born.

Imagine the stupendous and inspiring drama of the year of tragedy, 1914, restaged in miniature.

The setting and the costumes are the same. The same crowds invade the deserted camp. Out from the obscurity of the streets of the cities and the lanes of freshening country, they come to this camp set in a suburb of London. From all borders, all counties, all shires they come, strange in their dialects, strange in their garb, strange in their first shyness. They hide, as the race ever does, emotion and feeling.

Just a handful at first—perhaps twenty or thirty; but behind and around them one sees the ghosts of the far-away days of early war. They materialise in one's vision. The arts, the professions, the trades, each pouring out its torrent of men, marching awkwardly, solemnly, clad in every variety of civilian clothing.

Then with a tremor and the queerest of pulsations in the throat, one realises the years that lie between. The mind steals back to the fateful days that marked for most the opening of the Great Adventure. One remembers those familiar battlefields — Ypres, Festubert, High Wood, Thiepval, Cambrai, on which that drama was played out and where lie its actors.

These are the ghosts of the men who have passed — the men whose splendid virility, whose promise of fruitful manhood lies in the bosom of France.

And it is here, in their silent and invisible presence, that the curtain rises on another drama—shall we call it—The Little Adventure.

Who are these men? Perhaps to the outsider's eye they look much the same as the men of 1914. They are still in mufti. Worn clothes, jackets in which the pockets droop pitiably, collars devoid of ties, ties to which no collars give effect, baggy trousers, boots thin and cracked. Derby hats of pre-war vintage, caps of faded hues, even the "decayed Homburg hat,"—five years older and sensibly more decayed. They still look anything but soldiers.

But there is a strangely perceptible difference. For shoulders are straighter and broader, heads more erect, and absence of slouching.

"For 'e saw the set o' my shoulders,
An' I couldn't 'elp 'olding straight
When me an' the other rookies
Come under the barrick gate."

And in their eyes is a look—a little of hardness, a little of fatalism, and much of humour, — the things that distinguish, to those who observe, the man who went from the man who did not.

Why are they here? What is it in the past that calls them back—in the memories of shell-swept roads at night, with hurrying silent men and rattling limbers—in the desolation of mud and wire seen from some post by the cold light of flares — of the flies that rise from some deserted trench as one walks down it —of the scream and crash of the barrage—of red, gaping, ghastly wounds and of death.

What seek these men? Is it the spirit of adventure dominant above all else? Is it humanitarianism that leads them to succour a nation in distress? Is it that they have probed the mirage of civilian life, and buffeted and bruised they drift back to the old familiar things?

Only the inmost heart of the man can answer these questions.

They are a motley crew. Here a late Major with the Distinguished Service Order; he commanded a battery of field-guns at Ypres in 1917. There an ex-Captain of Lovat's Scouts, with the Military Cross and the Mons Star; a late R.F.C. pilot, many subalterns, ex-sergeant-majors with Distinguished Conduct Medals, quartermaster-sergeants, corporals—but private soldiers all.

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The natural question that arises is why such an expedition to North Russia was necessary or expedient. The amazing events of the closing months of 1918—the downfall of German power, the armistice, the Peace Conference—sufficed completely to occupy the public mind, and few, if any, remembered that in far away Russia a handful of British troops had since May 1918 kept Germany from acquiring and utilising the Murmansk coast as a submarine base; and further, and far more important, had arrested the flow of German troops to the Western front at a most critical juncture—namely, the conclusion of the German offensive in the spring. From September 1917, German divisions had been transferred from Russia to France and Belgium at an average rate of six per month. But from the moment British troops landed in June to September, when the tide in France had turned and the Germans were obliged, in spite of all risks, to send reinforcements westward, not a single German division was withdrawn from Russia. During this period Hindenburg asked urgently for ten divisions to be sent to him from this

theatre, only to be told that not one could be spared. The Germans could not face the risk of a popular Russian rising.

The further query then arises as to why that British force was not withdrawn after the signing of the armistice in November 1918. In the first instance, the port of Archangel was freezing up. In the second, the internal situation in Russia demanded the continuance of such a force in the north. An Allied front protected the inhabitants of North Russia from the spreading ravages of Bolshevism—an era of savagery of which atrocities such as these are typical:—

"In a property near Gomel, Bolsheviks broke into a house where the mother and her four children were dining; they cut off the mother's head and threw it in the soup tureen, then the children's, one of which they put on each plate."

"The prisoners taken out to Machouk were made to dig their own graves and buried alive. Axes were used to drive back into their living tomb any who tried to escape."

No one—least of all a nation which so recently engaged herself for a broken word—could abandon a helpless people to such a fate.

Early then in 1919 the existence of a force in North Russia was brought vividly to the realisation of the British public by the medium of the daily Press. General Ironside, commanding at Archangel, indicated in messages to the War Office that the Bolshevik forces opposing him were contemplating offensive action, with a view to acquiring the North Russian territory, thus far intact from their devastating influence. Help was needed. Reinforcements and relief were two essentials for tired worn-out men. Finally the announcement of the formation of a Russian Relief Force was made public. Officers and men, serving and demobilised, poured in to the War Office and Scotland Yard, proffering their services in any capacity. Thus the Russian Relief Force came into being.

Its task was primarily to relieve the men who had endured the rigours of the Arctic winter. But there was a far greater, a far more inspiring task ahead. The people of North Russia living under our protection were every day gaining courage and heart, and every day showed an increase of recruits to the Russian Army which was in the process of formation by the local governments under the direction of General Ironside at Archangel and General Maynard at Murmansk. British troops at these ports were training and equipping these recruits, and turning them into complete units. But in this connection it must be remembered that it is the influence and example of British grit and character that tells with all foreigners, and this was the chief factor in heartening the Russians to stand alone. It was estimated that in three or four months the Russian forces would be able to take the field by themselves. Then and then only could the British troops withdraw.

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Officers and men alike, once at Park Royal, became impatient. They chafed at the delay of equipping the force, the hesitancy, the vagueness of the expedition, the lack of knowledge of the actual situation, the ignorance of prevailing conditions. An unreasonable attitude, possibly. But having volunteered to go to Russia, they wanted to go—at once. Equipping proceeded. A civilian brigade became a brigade khakied and beribboned.

The wave of restlessness grew stronger. Men grew tired of waiting, and when allowed on leave failed to return. The roll of absentees grew.

The last week of April brought news of a projected move to Sandling Camp in Kent, and finally the Brigade left Park Royal behind and settled in Sandling.

More equipping, efforts at training, all the necessary and essential precautions and preparations for service. All the fearsome inoculations for typhoid and cholera, the rigours of gas chambers, the reawakening of the spirit of discipline dormant in these men.

Finally, that last inspection and the presentation of colours by Major-General Sir Henry Rawlinson on the twenty-second day of May. Then the amazing change of a month became manifest. This was no brigade of recruits. All the units were of the same character. Tanned by the sun, hardened by service abroad, officers and men alike left no doubt as to their efficiency.

A few days later, on the 27th and the last day of May, the force left the sun-kissed county of Kent.

Over the ridge at Sandling came the morning sun, catching the gorse and broom in a blaze of gold. Down the long stony tracks from the camps poured marching bodies of laughing jesting men, rifles over one arm, kit-bags under the other, to the tune "Good-by-ee — Don't sigh-ee," heard how many times on the roads of France.

A station thronged with troops — a worried railway transport officer—a harassed stationmaster—a few canteen workers — officers organising entrainment.

Then a few shouted good-byes—a whistle—the train moves — a mighty cheer of joy and we are *en route*.

And so to Newcastle and Tilbury Dock, where the majority of the absentees suddenly appear. Two more arrive in what is apparently their private tugboat, when the ship is already under way; while the third and last—missing for some three weeks—is not discovered until the following morning, when he is found playing the cornet in his accustomed place in the band.

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On shipboard all ideas, conversations, actions run in the deepest of grooves, even on a transport. But then all voyages were ever the same.

Ulysses, one feels sure, drank gin in the smoke-room and joined in the sweep on the day's run, and then, no doubt, tampered, to his own ends, with the patent log.

After all the parades that the army inexorably demands shall be performed between sunrise and noonday, there come the gathering of little groups, discussing in the lounge on deck, the Derby, the day's run, the midnight sun, mines, the chances of rough weather.

The laughter of men comes up from the fore well-deck. In a ring of men two marines engage in a rough-and-tumble. Two Irishmen spar with the gloves. The intensely critical spectators advise, remonstrate, cheer, and laugh. Their plaudits urge the combatants to Trojan efforts.

Crack-kk-kk-kk-kk. From the stern comes the vicious rattle of a Lewis gun. Packing-cases make wonderful targets at sea. But the shooting is too good. They last but a few seconds and then are shattered, to become the flotsam and jetsam of the restless waters.

The dinner bugle goes. There is a rush on deck, a falling in of men in orderly ranks. In an instant the men disappear and the decks are silent and deserted, save for an occasional sentry pacing to and fro, or an orderly officer going to or coming from duties.

Divine service on a foggy Sunday morning. A short sermon from the senior chaplain. "The sea is His, and He made it." A raucous "Hear, hear," from the ship's syren. Syrens are most understanding instruments. "But the enemy has held it for four years," goes on the reverend.

The syren shrieks twice in spirited protest. The representative of H.M. Navy on board looks quizzically at the speaker and turns his eyes seaward with a smile. Then the ending, "Now to God the Father——"

More blasts from the syren, drowning for an instant the sound of men's voices raised in hymnal praise—then a hushed silence—a blessing—the hymn for His Majesty—sharp words of command—quick movements of men.

Divine service is over.

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Murmansk, mirages, and the midnight sun. Seven days at sea and the convoy anchors in the harbour of the quaint northern port, under the stern of H.M.S. *Glory*, with the seaplane carriers *Pegasus* and *Nairana* and the hospital ship *Garth Castle* as company. And overhead swings an observation balloon, a reminder of less pleasant days in another area of war. Fears of the proximity of a front are dispelled by the intimation that it is only a wireless balloon.

The photographic record of this expedition should be, if ever compiled, a most comprehensive one. After four years of prohibition cameras are coming into their own, whereby the midnight sun must assuredly be growing in lustre from pardonable pride. Never has he been so discussed or so

ardently photographed. Later, the interest in the sun is temporarily diverted by mirages of snow-covered cliffs and inverted fishing-smacks. But the sun is ever first favourite.

Early next morning, up anchor, out from the harbour, and away. The temperature drops when we enter the White Sea. Ice is sighted, and the vessels pass through a fast-melting flee. Eleven days out, and in the morning of the twelfth day we wake to view the white walls, red roofs, and green and gold minarets of Archangel.

II.

Archangel was depressingly uninteresting. Even the presence of G.H.Q. in all its attendant glories, surrounded by satellites in the shape of the American, French, Italian, and Russian headquarters, failed to stir us to enthusiasm.

Our arrival almost affected Russian impassivity. General Sadleir Jackson obeyed the northern law and accepted bread and salt. The White Guards of the city presented their arms to the brigade and shouted us a Russian greeting — "*Zdrahyyeh zhelayim gahspodin*" (I give you greeting).

But the private soldier was not at home. His comparatively wonderful French failed him completely. *Combien* merely produced a more pronounced vacuity in the face of the Russian vendor. Though after twenty-four hours every one knew the utility of *kharasho* (all right) and *dobra* (good), and the old familiar "finish" became a potent factor in conversation.

Dull as the base proved to be, there was some little enlivenment due to rumour. Bases were ever beset by rumour, and the one in North Russia was no exception. The Bolsheviks were in flight, or else they were advancing on Archangel in seven-league boots, or the Germans had refused to sign the peace terms and hostilities had reopened, or we were to be recalled to England at once, or we were to expect no mails. They were all pure fantasies, but as basic facts for vehement argument in the mess they were invaluable.

N—— wanted to dash up country at once. After three days of Archangel so did every one else. N—— had heard that the skies were black with duck and the lakes boiled with fish, whose penchant for dry fly surpassed that of any known piscatorial variety. As N—— is amazingly expert at casting and his snipe record is known throughout India, this restlessness on his part caused us no surprise. We all had guns and rods. Valises of enormous proportions contained more sporting accoutrements than those needed for the prosecution of war. The potentialities of trout breakfasts and duck

dinners, viewed from the base, were enormous. What developed must be revealed later.

At least we have had our river houseboat party in Peace year. Admittedly space was limited and luxury at a minimum. When one battalion of officers and men, in addition to rations for fourteen days, occupies one barge, surplus room is quite unknown. So for over two hundred miles of the Dvina the brigade fed the Russian mosquito as that insect had never before been fed. A mighty ukase must have gone forth to all mosquito tribes in North Russia, for the pestilent brutes attended the barges in their tens of thousands. Patent remedies and deterrents merely acted as choice cocktails. In desperation one man appealed to the Medical Officer to be completely painted with iodine. The M.O. sympathetically pointed out that transport facilities were extremely limited, and the War Office, though indulgent to a degree, could hardly be expected to allow innumerable G.S. waggons loaded with iodine tubes to follow the column. So with calm resignation the man went back to his bitten fate.

One of the advantages of twenty-four hours of daylight rested in the fact that it seemed no imposition to stop at two o'clock in the morning and order the brigade to bathe and breakfast. The Russian peasant in the villages along the river always seemed to be awake, no matter the hour. Bearded old men in faded red and blue blouses would shyly gather and quizzically regard the troops. Their women-folk, much less shy, would barter eggs and milk for our staple diet of beef and biscuit. Butter we purchased at six shillings a pound. One spirited mess president even produced cream cheese.

A solemn Storasta (headman) of one village conducted a battalion headquarters in state to his log cabin, to the intense approval of his three daughters and the serious diminution of his stores of tea. The Russian's capacity for tea from a samovar is colossal. Every one aimed at being truly polite, but the strain of imbibing gallons of tea was enormous. Nothing was more welcome than the warning of the tug's syren.

For five days and nights that barge moved slowly up the vast Dvina. The thrilling prospect of a Bolshevik demonstration from the wooded banks was never realised. In this amazing war, with a line of communication of three hundred miles, that danger is always imminent. But either the Bolshevik had departed from our flank or we had awed him completely. First contact with the enemy was after we had disembarked at B——, the advanced base. Three scouts complete with the latest information regarding the Bolsheviks were captured at G.H.Q. At B—— the brigade was joined by a Russian battalion—"Dyer's battalion," of not inconsiderable fame. And not only men,

but women also. The C.R.E. had among his sappers several sturdy ex-Bolshevik women, and as Royal Engineers they were quite useful. Striking evidence of the adaptability of the Russian was shown when a party of Bolo prisoners arrived at the advanced cage. One of their number volunteered to guard them. He was given a British forage-cap, a rifle, and S.A.A., and he proceeded to his duty with perfect *sangfroid*. Admittedly the late Bolsheviks were enjoying what was probably their most substantial meal for a fortnight, yet the Gilbertian aspect of the situation remained.

Our arrival at B—— coincided with the departure from the shores of Russia of the troops we had come to relieve. It is well that the story of their endurance is being made known. They have left behind their quota of brave British hearts, and the Russian will tend their resting-places.

It was at B—— also that the fame of N—— spread throughout the land. By virtue of much skill in casting an "Orange Quill" upon the waters, the mess breakfasted daily on a variety of roach, a delectable change from salt bacon. The catch one morning was twenty-nine, and N——, though thoroughly soaked to the waist, was radiantly happy.

The next afternoon in the orderly room the Adjutant was aroused from his slumbers by a violent ringing of the telephone.

"G.H.Q. to speak to Major N——."

It was regretted that N—— was not in camp.

"Would you send for him immediately please for the Commander-in-Chief?"

Runners dashed hither and thither to discover an officer who had so suddenly leapt into prominence. In due course N—— arrived.

"The C.-in-C.'s compliments to Major N——, and where does he get his fish?"

"In a lake beyond the village of O——, sir."

"Could we have a more definite location, please?"

It was given. Then. "And what is the time to fish?"

"Oh, the General should come down between the hours of twelve and three in the morning, sir."

"Thank you." Br-rr-rr.

So far the General has never appeared at the lake to fish with N——'s commando, though they looked expectantly for him in the grey dawn of every morning.

III.

Encouraged by our arrival, strengthened by our presence, raised in morale by our enthusiasm, the loyal Russian troops in the forward zone, led into attack by British officers, captured two villages of considerable importance, Troitsa and

Topsa. The Bolshevik suffered somewhat, for he lost several commissars, including the chief of the Archangel district.

Our own force, not yet wanted for action, continued training and idling in the warm July sunshine, when suddenly we were plunged into stark tragedy. Mutiny, butchery, the horror of revolution of the primitive, raged among us. Russian troops, comprising Dyer's battalion, upon whom so much careful work and energy had been expended, and in whom we all had such pregnant hopes, rose and foully butchered their British and Russian officers, roamed through Topsa and Troitsa, blazing indiscriminately with Lewis guns and rifles, and then a wild revolutionary rabble, disorganised and awed by a few cool steady British soldiery, fled into the woods and joined the Bolsheviks.

The daily press of England has contained in its columns so many false conclusions with reference to this mutiny, that a short retrospection into the formation of Dyer's battalion is necessary.

Bolshevik prisoners and deserters, secured during the winter months, had been incarcerated at Archangel. Composed almost entirely of peasantry, these men had been mobilised by the Bolshevik forces, driven into an army of communists and commissars, forced to fight under the threat of instant death and reprisals on their women and children; yet, withal held together from very fear. Their clothing was poor, their rations of bread and dried fish inadequate. To these simple fearing peasantry came strange rumours of good food, warm clothing, prevalent in the ranks of their enemies. They were warned often of the "Anglo-French and Japanese-American robbers and executioners."[1] Nevertheless many of them came over to our lines, or were captured in minor operations throughout the long winter. By dint of reasonable treatment and propaganda, there followed the inevitable reaction against the Bolshevik creed. Their numbers were sufficient to justify the proposal that they should be turned into an armed force to support our weak forces against their late compatriots. This was actually done, and the 1st battalion of the Slavo-British legion came into being.

The difficulty that existed at that time, and has existed indeed throughout all our work in North Russia, was the question of the officer,—so very few of the old Tzarist army officers had escaped to the northern anti-Bolshevik forces during the tragic months of revolution. All that had so escaped were serving with loyal Russian troops. In officering the S. B. L. there were two alternatives before the General Commanding. Either to have all British

[1] I quote from an official order of the 6th Bolshevik Army, dated the 30th October 1918.

officers, or else create officers from the shopkeeper and working class of Archangel. The former plan was impossible, owing to the dearth of such officers. The latter therefore came into operation, and in addition a few British officers, some of the most able in the country, were attached to the regiment to shape its destiny.

Unhappily the Russian officer in commanding men uses methods of a different character to our own. They are harsh and tyrannical, using blows to enforce obedience; but what is worse, they have no conception of devoting themselves to the interests of their men—feeding them, clothing them, ministering to their welfare and comfort,—attentions which bring their reward in loyalty and devotion. On the contrary, these officers, given power, authority, privileges, think of nothing else. To exert these powers, to drink and be merry, constitutes the day. The men must look after themselves.

Thus Bolshevik agents, introduced in the S.B.L., having full scope, spread their insidious doctrines, reawakening the ideas that these ignorant peasantry had put aside. No one suspected such a movement. The native officers, who might have been cognisant of the sowing of the seeds of revolt, were idling. They had no interest in their men, in their thoughts, or their actions. The plans for mutiny, organised by an agent who held the rank of sergeant, matured. And on the morning of July the seventh, as the sun rose, five British officers were attacked in their billets, riddled with bullets and rent with the bayonet.

(*To be continued.*)

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